ALPHONSINE:

OR,

MATERNAL AFFECTION.

A Novel.

BY

MADAME GENLIS.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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ALPHONSINE,

MATERNAL AFFECTION.

CHAP. XXIII.

Continuation of Diana's History.

On my quitting the wicket I first went to my chamber, to dispose of the things which Leonora had let down, to me. I afterwards went into my oratory; and after having said a long prayer, I placed a cup filled with holy water on my small table, and removed it into my chamber, placing it at the right side of my bed. I was excessively weak, and my trem-

bling still continued: I took a small glass of orange-flower water, and seated myself for half an hour in my arm chair. I felt nothing but an inward pain, and took some nourishment. It was eight o'clock in the morning; I finished my preparations, and carried to the left side of my bed a large table, on which I arranged every thing that I thought would be necessary for myself and my infant. I placed on a waiter a great many bottles of syrup and strong juices, sweetmeats, sugar, wine, bread, and soft biscuits; and, on one side, six bottles and four large decanters full of water. In the centre of the table I put a lamp and kettle full of boiling water; the child-bed linen, and other necessary things, occupied the rest of the table. I placed on my night-table,

that

that stood on the other side near the smaller table, my night lamp and two candles, and fastened to one of my bed-posts a great bag, containing several pounds of wax candles; and, to conclude, I put at the foot of my bed two large empty pails, which had been given me two days before. I was so much occupied in arranging all this, that my thoughts were completely absorbed in it; but when I had finished and looked on the preparations, I was seized with affright in reflecting that, in order to preserve my own life as well as that of my infant, it was indispensable that I should retain as much strength, understanding, and presence of mind, as would serve me on this awful occasion, without any assistance whatever,

so that I might be able to supply the place of midwife, waiting-woman, and nurse, at the very time that I was suffering the most excruciating pains. The trembling fit, which had ceased, now attacked me more violently, and was nearly convulsive. I seated myself in my arm chair, and becoming exceedingly thirsty, I drank a little wine and water; after which I prayed with ardour, found myself more calm, and fell asleep. About an hour after, I was again awoke by my pains; it was about midnight; I ate a little; my pains increased, and now became more incessant and strong . . . . I therefore undressed myself, thinking to lie down. I lighted my night lamp and two wax tapers, and casting myself on my

my knees before my arm chair: "Oh, my God!" exclaimed I, lifting up my hands towards Heaven, " I am forsaken by all " nature; but what is human assistance " without thy protection? Reanimate thou " my love, my confidence, and my faith! " May not a submissive and forlorn crea- " ture hope every thing from thy mercy?" After I had finished these words, I paſſed by the side of the small table, and lay me down on the bed. I felt myself in a manner miraculously fortified; my pains continually increasing, while my strength seemed proportionally to augment. During my labour, the time of which I had not considered till this moment, and which lasted nine hours and a half, I never entertained the least gloomy idea, the least

fear or weakness. At length, the very instant when my clock struck ten, in the evening (the 1st of November), I was happily delivered, and heard the voice of my infant. Oh, happy moment! impossible to describe! . . . . I suspended as it were for a time my joy, as I had yet a more necessary office to perform; it was necessary that I should act, and bestow on my infant those cares which are immediately requisite. Heaven, whom I implored, and whom I thanked with transports, was my only guide, and enabled me to do both for myself and for my infant every thing that professional persons might have done. I had passionately wished for a girl, and held in my arms one of the most lovely and

healthy

healthy babes that can be described . . . . and its miraculous preservation at its birth, was to me the most sure pledge of Divine protection and security as it were for the future. O mighty power, so little yet known, of religion and nature, how despicable did now all the delusive pleasures and joys of life appear to me! I sprinkled the holy water on my daughter's head; more happy than any other woman, I was destined to act every part towards her; I baptized her; I named her *Alphonsine*, after one of the baptismal names of her father. "My God," exclaimed I, bathing her with my tears, "bless this little innocent, whose exist-"ence is a prodigy of your goodness! "Angels, extend over my child your pro-

" teeting wings!—shield her from hatred
" and jealousy!" In speaking these words
I pressed my infant to my bosom, and
gazed on her with raptures. . . . . How
happy was I! I felt no more pain, I was
not even enfeebled, and my child possessed an astonishing strength and bloom.
I laid myself down with her in my arms,
and my bed ever after became her own.
—Never did Heaven unite a mother to
her child in such bonds.— What a
change did I now feel in my situation!
Melancholy no longer could enter my
cavern, where the most powerful interest occupied and filled up as it were
every moment of my life. My imagination now no longer could wander:
this event effaced from my consideration

tion every future danger, and established all the sentiments of my heart. Wi h what pleasure did I now admire the arrangement of my chamber, and those happy preparations, the sight of which had so much appalled me in the morning! How much did I enjoy the thought of having been able, in these awful moments, to be my own assistant, or rather that the powerful hand of Providence had done every thing for me! At about midnight I took a few cups of refreshing liquor; and however I was desirous of sleeping, I resisted it, because it deprived me of the happiness of thinking, and seeing my daughter: I considered it as a separation from her; however, at length overpowered, I fell asleep; but the fear

of hurting my infant often awoke me, yet it was a moſt delightful interruption, for I again found my child at my side, gazed on it, and, thanking Heaven, went to sleep again. The next day, in the morning, I was deliciously occupied in making my bed for the day. I dreſſed my child; she cried a little, but soon ceased. It is very remarkable that this day, and during the whole time that I passed in my bed, not a single afflicting idea offered itself to my mind: I was totally absorbed in my own happiness, and in the first moment of rapture and gratitude nothing could disturb my thoughts, as I considered uneasiness and apprehension both impious and ungrateful. Thus, by the mighty power of religion, this

moment

moment was to me the happiest of my life: though confined alone in a dungeon, deprived of every human consolation, in a situation where we stand in need of the assistance of art and the cares of friendship, I enjoyed the most pure and most perfect felicity which it is possible to taste on earth.

What would have been the astonishment of my cruel oppressors, if at this epoch they had been told that I was the most happy being on earth? Happiness proceeds from the soul; the consequence of a pure conscience. Thus it is, that whether in the secluded cloister or in the barren desert, whether in the prison or on the scaffold, in spite of fate

and oppression, we feel the most delightful security in virtue, and all the enthusiasm of an exalted mind.

After the information which I had obtained from my books, I did not give my child the breaſt until the third day, and this afforded me still a new source of gratitude towards Providence, that I was abundantly stored with milk. To suckle her children is without doubt a great happiness to every mother; but how much more satisfactory and tender must that duty have been to me! it was of such importance; I was the only nurse of my child in the universe; none could supply the place. It was a most precious reflection to me, to think that nothing on

earth

earth could diminish in its sight the merit of my cares; and I dwelt with transports on the thought that Heaven had not furnished on earth any being but me to nourish, cherish, and educate her. This maternal destiny seemed to me to be an envious situation; I thought my daughter, in consequence thereof, more immediately belonged to me, and I thanked Heaven which had imposed this obligation on me to devote myself entirely to the only attachment which I had in life. I remained six days in bed; I arose on the seventh, and for the first time left my infant to go to the wicket, where I found two baskets filled with provisions, which was hastily conveyed to my room, where on getting about half way I heard my

child

child cry at that distance, which the ears of a mother only could have heard. I had already passed the grotto of the fountain, which convinced me that at the entrance of the cavern it would be totally impossible to hear the voice of my Alphonsine. I made as much haste as possible; for although I still had a trembling in my knees and my hands, I was not very weak. After this, my first absence, I was anxious to see my daughter; I seated myself in my arm chair to undress her and dress her more comfortably; after which I put my chamber in order, and ventilated it by raising the drapery which formed a sort of partition; I then fumigated it with vinegar and sugar, and laid myself down again; when,

after

after the expiration of three days, I found myself in perfect health. I then proceeded to my oratory, where I carried my daughter; the way to which I had lighted by placing on the ground two lamps at some distance from each other, the least light being sufficient to conduct me, as I had even acquired the habit of walking thither in total darkness: I knew the cavern so well, that I often walked about it without any light; but in carrying my daughter, I imagined that the total darkness might have caused me some alarm. When I arrived at the oratory, I threw myself on my knees before the crucifix, holding my infant in my arms, offering her up to Heaven as it were in that attitude. This idea affected me much

for

for the first time; I thought that I might perhaps lose this precious child; that Heaven, ever master of its own gifts, might take it from me; that it was only confided as in trust to me, but that it belonged to its Creator, who had formed it for himself; and that it was my duty ever to be ready to resign it without a murmur. Here my tears flowed copiously, and my soul was much agitated. . . . I then descended into myself, and finding the most perfect submission to the will of God, my fears were all calmed, but I nevertheles felt a sencation of sorrow. In an absolute solitude as I was placed, the ideas which forcibly strike us always leave some traces; they are as it were impressed with that force, that the

heart

heart never forgets them. Ever since the birth of my daughter the day seemed rapidly to flow: besides the necessary cares which I bestowed on her, I passed whole hours in watching her while she slept, or walking with her in my arms, never however going beyond my oratory, lest some one might come to the wicket at an unusual hour and hear her cry. I always took care in those walks to have my dog with me, that he might be as a signal as it were on any person's approach. I had the precaution, the first days that I entered the cavern, to place a small mat for Azor, about two hundred paces from my chamber, where he commonly passed the whole night, and it was by mere chance that he had apprized me of Leonora's

nora's first visit: he used to run about the cavern; and my chamber being formed by great mats and hung with tapestry, was so far from the door of the cavern, that even the dog himself could not hear a noise at the wicket.

Totally taken up with my Alphonsine, I had very little time to attend to my music, to drawing, reading, or writing; but I was ever considering on a plan for her education, and I resolved from this moment never to play again until her organs should somewhat be expanded, and to use no more perfumes in the cavern until she had reached the age of six or seven years, if Heaven should prolong our lives and our residence in the cavern till that time.

time. I had already prepared, in my imagination, all the scenes which were necessary to establish the sensibility and the virtuous sentiments of Alphonsine: alas! I was still ignorant how much her first education must naturally differ from all others! The eighteenth day after the birth of Alphonsine, I made a discovery in my cavern which caused me the greatest joy. Being in my oratory, I wanted to wipe off a stain from my crucifix, caused by the vapours; and holding in one hand my handkerchief, and in the other a taper, I perceived the light of my candle wavering, while at the same time I felt the air blowing upon my hand, which proceeded from a fissure in the rock. I was transported with delight: notwith-

notwithstanding my total seclusion from the world, this feeble communication caused in me the most inexpressible joy. I immediately went and fetched my daughter, that she might, together with me, breathe this salutary air, which probably proceeded from the meadows or some garden, and enjoy at least in some measure the fresh air. While I was in the oratory I heard Azor barking; I was startled, as this was not the hour that Leonora usually came to the cavern. I carried my child to the bed, and ran to the wicket, where I found a basket, which contained a note of Leonora, that I tremblingly opened, and read as follows:
" I have received positive orders from
" my Lord to give you no more light; I
" therefore

"therefore apprize you of this, that you
"may be sparing of what you have left,
"as you will have no more given you."

This terrible decree was a thunderbolt to me. How was I now to educate my child? how could I take the necessary care? and, even supposing that I had sufficient ingenuity to find out such means as did not immediately present themselves to my mind, what would be the existence of this unfortunate infant? These thoughts struck me to the soul: however, I recollected that the salvation of my daughter depended on my strength, therefore I did not suffer myself to be cast down; and instead of fixing my thoughts on the horror of my new situation, I was only

only occupied in finding out means to alleviate it, and even to discover in the frightful aspect which it presented, whether there were not some particular advantages attached to it. I had always so providently managed the oil and the tapers which had been given me, that at the birth of Alphonsine I had still a very great store by me; but during the last eighteen days I had nearly consumed it, and I had now only by me about six pounds of tapers and two bottles of wine. I knew very well that Don Sancho was absolute master of my fate, and I entertained no doubt but this cruel order did proceed from him: I concluded, that on receiving no answer to any of his letters, he was now endeavouring to put my patience

tience to trial, and that the Count being in his interest had agreed to his design; that the latter furnished him with the most barbarous advice, thinking that I should not imagine that Don Sancho had any share in this inhuman treatment. I supposed that if I were to write to Don Sancho I should obtain light in a very short time; but that they would not keep me long in total darkness, if they saw that I still persisted in my refusal. But as my daughter occupied all my thoughts, I reflected that although the privation of a comfort which is both useful and agreeable might be an extreme misfortune, yet she who had never enjoyed it would ever remain insensible to the want of it. I recollected that persons who were born blind

supported

supported life without the least chagrin, although they were told that they were deprived of one of the most precious of all the senses; and I flattered myself that my daughter would have less to complain of than they, if I kept her totally ignorant of the use as well as the existence of light; besides, I determined, that if we were destined to pass many years yet in this cavern, not to mention it to her as an imprisonment, but to endeavour to make her believe that this enclosure was the universe; that we were placed there by the Supreme Being; and by loving each other tenderly, and blessing our Creator, that we should enjoy another life replete with glory and felicity. I was persuaded that the vague

ideas

ideas which the privation of sight would produce in her mind would answer my designs, and consequently would ensure to her that sort of happiness which I could give her during our confinement. However, I was affected with grief at the thought that I could not possibly teach her to read, write, or draw, or any occupation necessary for her sex; that I was also deprived as well of the means of amusing her as of instructing her; and, in short, that I was deprived of the means of seeing her; but I did not care about any thing which was personal to me, I existed but for my daughter.

There is something consolatory in the display of great fortitude, which elevates

the soul and raises our ideas. It is impulse, which, directed by religion, increases and becomes sublime from the moment we touched it; and I took much credit to myself for not having sunk under this last blow; I conceived it as the most happy presage of the future; I thought that, as soon as we find ourselves powerful enough to resist persecutions with fimness, we are sure to triumph over our enemies, and from that moment I made all the necessary preparations to bear my new situation without trouble. I established a sort of arrangement in my chamber, my closet, and my chest, that would enable me to find every thing with facility, without any light: I had already counted the number of paces to the

the oratory, as well as to the number of steps down to the well. I placed my tables and other furniture in a fixed place, in such a manner that they would never obstruct me; for nothing contributes more to our supporting misfortunes, than absolute necessity; it not only diverts our grief, but we also attain a degree of consolation. We feel a pleasure in inventing ingenious expedients; and as soon as we have carried into effect all the resources which our mind and imagination suggested, we find that our case is less pitiable than we at first imagined. I set apart in the closet six pounds of wax lights, and half of the oil which I possessed, resolved to keep it against unforeseen accidents, where light might be

indispensably necessary, and to employ the other bottle of oil until I should have finished all the requisite garments for Alphonsine. Her child-bed linen I contrived in such a manner that it might serve her for three years, and I was desirous of making her some clothes which might suit her for the age of four or five. In the evening, after I had laid myself down, I burst into tears on reflecting that this darling infant, during her stay in this cavern, would never more see the light. Alphonsine at that moment was in a profound sleep: "O my child," exclaimed I, "persecuted from the first "moment of your nativity, you are "doomed to be deprived of the delights "of the most precious gifts in nature!

"My

"My cruel enemies, though ignorant
"of thy existence, have found the
"means to oppress you. Alas! scarcely
"had your eyes began to distinguish a
"feeble light, to-morrow they will seek
"its rays in vain; in vain they will
"wander about—they will only meet
"with frightful darkness—and your un-
"fortunate mother, enveloped in the
"same obscurity, who should direct
"your first steps, can only be a trem-
"bling guide; you will receive my ca-
"resses without the power of beholding
"me, without reading the tender ex-
"pressions of my eyes. . . . . Always
"alone, though ever together, we shall
"live without seeing each other, and
"you never will distinguish my fea-
"tures."

Meditating on those dismal reflections, I shed torrents of tears, and my heart was broken when I extinguished the lamp that was in our chamber, which I had resolved no more to light for my daughter. It seemed to me as an act of cruelty that I should voluntarily deprive my child of light.

The next day proved a dreadful day to me; my daughter cried incessantly, and her screams pierced my soul, thinking that the darkness was perhaps the cause of it. I carried her about in my arms the greatest part of the day, but that only within a small space of sixty or seventy paces. I did not venture to go further with her, because there were

many

many windings, and I wished to study still more this part of the cavern before I ventured to take her along with me. From that dismal day until the age when she began to speak, my unfortunate child was incessantly moaning and crying. Having no interior object to amuse her, there was nothing at this age that could otherwise divert her. However, she was well in health; she grew plump, took the breast, and slept perfectly well.

As to myself, accustomed as I had been for more than eight months to sit or be moving about in total darkness, I did not find much difficulty in dressing, undressing her, and minding her without any light; and in a few months I

was so ready in this respect, that I could nearly attend her with as much facility as when I had my lamp burning. As long as my bottle of oil lasted I only lighted my lamp about two hours every evening; and as soon as Alphonsine was laid down and gone to sleep, I was incessantly occupied in working for her, and washing her linen, which it was impossible to give Leonora with my own. At the time that they allowed me all that I asked for, I had demanded and obtained a great stock of soap, which I had used with a great deal of frugality, and now found particularly useful; I performed this necessary labour in my oratory, where I found the fountain of the greatest service. Before I extinguished

my lamp, I got ready in the basket a thousand little things for the next day; and taking it up, I proceeded to my child, and laid myself down, after having placed the basket at my bed-side. From that epoch the personal privation which I suffered for the want of light no longer grieved me; indeed, I wished to partake of the misfortune of my infant; I applauded the progress that I had made, and I flattered myself that my daughter would possess a greater advantage, and I never again saw the light without experiencing a grief, and even sometimes a kind of remorse, in thinking that my child would never enjoy it. Had I been alone, and had thus passed twelve or thirteen hours a day in total darkness, I think I should never have been able to support

the weakness of such an existence; but I held my daughter in my arms, and walked about with her at different times for nearly five or six hours: besides, I had another happiness, that of suckling her; then it was that I entertained still the flattering hope, which never quitted me, that of representing to myself the hour of our release. I so much thought on that joyous and ravishing event, and on every thing which I should feel by giving to my daughter the light of day, and seeing her play about, looking on the Heavens and the marvellous works of Nature, that if God should reserve me to such a supreme felicity, I shall not experience more than I had really imagined. I pictured to myself, under the most glowing colours, the fortunate situation

ation in which my fancy had placed me, and these reveries so charmed me, that they banished from me every sorrowful reflection; producing the most happy emotions, and the greatest transports of joy. It is true they were but illusions; I nevertheless was confined in a dismal dungeon; but what of that, if my chimeras, delighted me? Alas! even life itself is but a rapid dream, a chain of illusion, pleasing or grievous; there is nothing real but virtue, all else is nothing but ideal or deceit. We afflict ourselves, we enjoy but illusions; we see that which never is, and hope for that which is impossible, or reckon upon that which never will be. Anticipation is at most times but a kind of insanity, and security nothing but blindness. In the ordinary

situation of life, when we reflect on our fears, our disquietude, our chagrin, and our pleasures, we seem astonished at having been thus alarmed, tormented, afflicted, or even having enjoyed. The object, and the causes which had produced such strong agitations upon our more maturer recollection, seemed to be nothing but phantoms and reveries.—We love without being beloved; we love because we suppose that which never existed, and particularly so when we are passionately in love. We cherish an imaginary being, an idol of our own creation: if we are thus abused by sensibility, our self-love deceives us still more. We think ourselves applauded and admired, when in fact we are secretly criticised with rigour and injustice, and are

secretly

secretly calumniated. The glory which we pursue flies from us, and we never obtain it but at the expence of happiness and tranquillity, and always find it troublesome, contested, and undurable. In short, every thing in life is merely the phantom of our brain; for even the sort of happiness which I have planned to myself is not at the bottom very different from all those which are called real. I have supported, without doubt, unparallelled hardships; I have suffered such anxiety and anguish as are undescribable; but these frightful moments passed away rapidly—religion always immediately tempered the horrors, and in this confinement, impenetrable to day-light, wherein passion has plunged me, in this obscure

abyss

abyss where vengeance detains me, I enjoy the most pure and delicious sensations; I taste a heavenly delight; and, what will seem more extraordinary, my days in general have passed on in a manner mild and peaceable; and I recollect that, in the first year of my marriage, I did not pass one single day without grief, and without shedding a torrent of tears. The disdain of the Count, and my passion for him, rendered me the most unfortunate of all beings; whereas, nothing can be compared to the sentiment that my daughter inspires me with: I had no idea, before I became a mother, of such an attachment, because love is selfish and unreasonable, while maternal fondness is pure and disinterested. Must not, there-

fore,

fore, so generous an affection expand our soul, improve our virtues, and inspire us with fortitude?

In the mean time, being desirous to increase my little stock of wax candles, in order that I might have enough to light me to complete my daughter's things, I gave a few more ducats to Leonora, and entreated her to bring me a few candles, assuring her at the same time that I had none left. She answered, that it was in my power to become happy by consenting to the happiness of Don Sancho; and added, that she would not encourage me in my obstinacy, and disobey the strict injunctions which she had received. In vain did I renew my entreaties; she was inflexible to the last.

In the course of this conversation she informed me that Don Sancho was totally ignorant of this new act of rigour, which assertion I did not give the least credit to.

This new oppression increased within me all the aversion and contempt which I had ever before entertained for Don Sancho, but which his last letters and conversations had somewhat diminished. On that very evening, as I was suckling my infant, a most distressing thought came across my mind: it occurred to me that my oppressors intended to try every possible means in order to exhaust my patience, and would most probably reduce me in the end to bread and water only; and then how could I bring up

my

my child? Her life depended on my health and strength, and thus was closely united to mine; O afflicting and dreadful thought!—Alas! every mother is happy in thinking her child will most probably survive her; and I, in consequence of the fatality attached to my situation, was dragging my daughter along with me into an untimely grave!—This horrible reflection, big with such bitter pangs, induced me to make a second trial on Leonora on her next visit. I did not think proper to confide to her my apprehensions, but told her that my health was fast decaying, that my lungs seemed affected, and that I begged to be allowed a pint of milk in addition to those provisions which she supplied me with. She promised she would. "But," said I, "if

" if by some strange refinement of cru-
" elty they should on a sudden prohibit
" it?" Leonora mused a while, then re-
suming: " As to your food," said she,
" you may be easy about that; I shall
" always take care to supply you with
" whatever you can wish for, on con-
" dition you be prudent."—" Oh, my
" dear Leonora, I shall be both prudent
" and grateful."—" Hitherto I have re-
" ceived no prohibition in this respect;
" but if by and by they should wish to
" retrench any thing from your allow-
" ance, you may rely upon me." These
words caused me infinite joy; I felt eager
as it were to embrace her who had just
cheered me with this assurance; I thank-
ed her with my tears, and told her I had
yet a little money and some valuable dia-
monds.

monds left; that the whole should be hers if she kept her word, and that the next time she should come I would give her a diamond locket worth six hundred ducats. She answered, that humanity and religion were her inducements in acting thus, and not interest; and she further told me that she would return at night and bring me a pint of milk, according to my request. As the sound of her voice clearly told me that she was really favourably disposed towards me, I concluded she had never been so well pleased with my offers; I therefore thought I might make another request. I had a steel, but scarce any flints or tinder left, and begged of her to let me have some, together with a bundle of matches; adding, that living in darkness I sometimes found

found some amusement in producing a few sparks, for the sake of dispelling the surrounding gloom for a few minutes in lighting the matches. Leonora made no hesitation to promise the flints and tinder, but she at first denied me the matches; yet, on my renewing my request in very pressing terms, and engaging to use but one a day, she at length consented. She accordingly returned at night, bringing me a pint of good milk, a large stock of flints and tinder, and a dozen bundles of matches. These presents I deemed a source of wealth, which I thought I cheaply purchased with a most magnificent diamond locket. This happy evening, which had calmed my bitter apprehensions, was followed by a tranquil night. By a singular good fortune, ever

since

since the birth of my Alphonsine, my sleep was most peaceable and refreshing; I never was disturbed with any bad dreams; on the contrary, I often beheld the most pleasing images; I saw my daughter grown up to the age of youth, walking about with her under the shade of delightful groves, or in the enamelled meadows; I witnessed her surprise, and the transports of her joy.... Celestial voices guided our paces, and angels, bright with divine lustre, protected Alphonsine, and hovered over her with their wings!—On awaking I found myself still happy; my daughter lay by the side of me, I heard her softly breathing—her head reclining on my bosom.

I had

I had finished all my little stock for her; and very little oil remaining, I ceased lighting my lamp. I used to lay my daughter on the bed after my dinner, and she always slept for three hours, which I employed in praying at the oratory, and playing on my guitar, accompanying hymns and anthems, the words of which I had composed. But I did not remain away from Alphonsine during the whole interval. I returned every half-hour to find out whether she was asleep. At night I wrote, having accustomed myself to write tolerably well in the dark, by means of a small ruler which I held on my paper, and which served to guide my lines and keep them at some little distances from each other:

I then

I then wrote only a journal and some reflections. These first materials thus collected have since enabled me to write my history, which I did not begin until the tenth year of my captivity. My daughter was now four months old; and ever since the eighteenth day after her birth, I had been deprived of the comfort of contemplating her; I durst not look at her during her sleep, lest she should awake on a sudden; but unable any longer to resist the eager desire of seeing her for a moment, I thought I might venture to tie a piece of cloth round her eyes on my laying her on the bed, which she submitted to without crying, and soon after she went to sleep. I then hastened to my oratory, there to light a wax taper; for dreading the noise might

awake

awake my daughter, I never struck a light in my chamber; I lighted my taper, and trembling with joyful expectation I approached the bed and knelt down on a stool; then placing my light on the night table, I cast my eyes all suffused in tears on this object of all my tenderness.—The band concealed part of her little face, her eyes, eye-brows, forehead, and part of her nose; but how improved I found her! With what religious sentiment of gratitude did I gaze upon her!—" Ungrateful," said I to myself, " possessed of such a treasure, " ever to repine . . . when Heaven, in " order to give it me, has performed a " miracle!—We both live; she grows, " and daily acquires new strength; she " has the bloom of the fresh rose, and

" I enjoy

" I enjoy perfect health. After so many
" wonders of goodness, ought I to mis-
" trust and dread futurity?—Is not our
" existence at this moment a thousand
" times more to be wondered at, than
" our deliverance can ever be?—What
" need I to heed the vile machina-
" tions of my enemies? Is not the Lord
" present here? does he not watch over
" my infant?—Innocent creature, and
" guardian angel of this cavern, I am
" happy to think that the Divine protec-
" tion hovers around thee; that it was
" for thee that I felt myself inspired...
" to thee that I shall owe the end of all
" my troubles. I can offer up to Hea-
" ven but regrets and forced penitence;
" but thy innocence will bring down
" Heaven's blessings in showers upon us

 " both.

" both. Thou hast already brought
" and diffused happiness through this
" cavern; it will become hallowed, and
" thy first sentiments will be addressed
" to thy Creator and to thy mother.
" Here will the praises of the Lord be
" sung by an uncontaminated mouth—
" here the homage thou wilt send up
" will be worthy the Lord's acceptance!
" The profane joys of the earth will be
" unknown to thee; thy looks will be
" chaste like thy thoughts. Thy eyes
" have beheld only the uniform gloomy
" night; no vanity has yet thrown its
" poisoned seeds into thy heart; thy mo-
" ther, herself a stranger to thy beauty,
" no flattery can possibly reach thy ears;
" her voice alone, and the sound of pious
" hymns, shall salute them. Blessed
" offspring

" offspring of Heaven, cherished and
" delicate plant, raised in the shade and
" sheltered from the sun's scorching
" beams and the southern blast; thou,
" whose senses will ever be unpolluted,
" wilt harbour none but virtuous sensa-
" tions—all thy life must be happy, for
" thy early days will be pure!" These
thoughts filled my soul with a sort of
heavenly transport. Religious faith and
gratitude had banished all apprehension;
maternal love and piety were infused to-
gether into my heart. With what fervour,
with what transport did I bless and adore
the Lord, while I gazed on my daugh-
ter!—I remained for upwards of two
hours in this delightful situation: my
daughter moved, and with a sigh I ex-
tinguished my taper—firmly resolving to

 allow

allow myself this enjoyment once every two or three months.

It is, indeed, to piety that I am indebted for such happy moments, as well as for the surprising tranquillity which I enjoyed ever after this. For what would have become of me in this dismal abode without the help of religion?

The next day I experienced a severe disappointment: on returning to the oratory, where I remembered I had left a basket containing my little store of wax tapers, tinder, &c. which Leonora had left me, I was extremely surprised to find, as I was feeling in the dark, nothing but melted wax that had run on the ground. It is most probable that in the hurry which

I was,

I was, I had dropt a lighted match in the basket, which setting fire to the rest, had consumed basket, tinder, wax candles and all. This was a very afflicting circumstance to me, and I took good care to punish myself for my neglect, for wishing to save up the few remaining candles against unfortunate occurrences. I renounced the promised happiness of seeing my child. This resolution was a painful sacrifice; it not only deprived me of an inexpressible pleasure, but also of the sweets of expectation. Meanwhile I still enjoyed the improving state of my daughter with transports: her strength daily increased, and she had happily cut her first teeth; she cried less; at seven months she began to evince signs of sensibility, and soon gave a twofold value to

my existence by understanding and re-turning my caresses.—As no exterior object engaged her attention, and I kept incessantly repeating the first words I wished her to pronounce, she spoke sooner than any other child; and I cannot describe what were my feelings when one morning, as I was holding her on my knees, I heard her distinctly articulate *my God!*—At those angelic sounds, at those moving accents, I nearly thought I heard an angel. Penetrated with a religious awe, I fell on my knees, and pressing my child to my bosom, I poured forth my soul in silence at the foot of the Divine throne: I did not venture to pray or join my voice to that of the little innocent, but listened with extacy. Twice she repeated, in audible voice, the words

my

my God! What a moment of delight! how much it increased my confidence in the Divine protection! Another singular revolution in my fate! my daughter speaks, though but ten months old!—Soon this frightful silence of my dungeon will cease—the most pure invocations will now be offered up to Heaven! This object of my only love will soon be able to call me, to answer me, and to listen to me!—and how easily shall I henceforth ſorget the world from which I am secluded! What does it contain? What treasures can I compare to that which I now possess? Religion, solitude, and profound meditations, had taught me to despise all the delusive pleasures, and all the frivolous enjoyments of vanity. In this dark asylum death seemed ever pre-

 sent

sent to my mind; my thoughts were in that respect as much engaged at the age of eighteen, as those of them who are on the brink of the grave with their reason and faculty more matured. What could the world now offer to me? Vain pleasures, which I had already lost the taste of, and the dangerous illusions of which I was perfectly acquainted with—riches. Did I not joyfully resign the most precious gems for a few matches? I no longer could conceive how it was possible that we should esteem that which was useless, and how we could desire either pomp or magnificence. I enjoyed nothing in life now but what the heart suggested, and my dungeon contained the only object that had any attraction for me.

Alphonsine, the following day, repeated a thousand times the sacred name which I had taught her: she never failed to pronounce it whenever she wished or asked for any thing; she acquired a habit of invoking the Deity, and of addressing herself to him, and that always rather in a plaintive voice, and with a charming sweetness: alas! it was to her a natural accent which she retained, and which gave her a supplicating tone, that I never heard without emotion and without tenderness. After having taught her to pay her devotion to our great Maker, I next occupied myself with teaching her to call on me, which she learnt in a few days. Every mother, more or less, enjoys this happiness; but who could taste it with delight to be compared to mine? Nothing

could abstract my thoughts from this maternal joy; every moment of my life was devoted to maternal attentions.

My daughter now began to evince some signs of the expansion of her understanding, and I sought a thousand different ways to amuse her; and although in this dark cavern the sound and the movements of music were the only things which could produce any impression on her, I still could not persuade myself to play on my instrument. She now no longer wept, nevertheless I very well knew when she was troubled: she then would sob and lay her head in my breast; but a single caress was sufficient to quiet her. After the expiration of the eleventh month she had not yet

evinced the smallest indication of mirth; I had never heard her laugh: perhaps she might have smiled; alas! and I was ignorant of it—the sweet smiles of my daughter were lost upon me!—Azor having four months before broken his collar, I had taken care of it, thinking to make a play-thing of the bells for my Alphonsine: this invention procured me one of the greatest pleasures which I ever felt in my cavern; I heard my daughter burst out into laughter.—These first expressions of mirth which rendered me so happy, notwithstanding caused me a sort of painful emotion, as the sound of laughter seemed so strange and so discordant in this place. This innocent joy which so much charmed me, produced a sad recollection of the situ-

ation of my darling infant; while she was laughing, my tears flowed copiously. The cellar of Azor had now become precious to me, and I went on the following day to the wicket, and intreated Leonora to furnish me with a dozen small bells, from which I formed a kind of plaything for Alphonsine. I taught her by degrees to walk, which she did very late, being extremely fearful; and although she did not go any where alone without holding me by the hand until she had attained the age of eight or nine years, she always evinced in walking a sort of mechanical fear, which she expressed by little starts and catching hold from time to time of my clothes. I now arrived at a most interesting epoch for me, the anniversary of the birth of

my

my daughter. I celebrated this most joyful day of my life by passing the greatest part of it in my oratory in prayers. The next day I gave her a small fan, which seemed much to please her; she had never before felt any thing but the slow and almost imperceptible air which issued through the small fissures of the rock near the fountain; she knew nothing of the noise of the wind, or the fresh zephyr breezes, and my waving the fan in her face gave her infinite pleasure; she thanked me by embracing me, and seemed to wish me to repeat it, when she in the most tender and effecting manner said, *my God, mama!* I then returned her the fan, with which she amused herself till the evening, and which ever since has been one of her

greatest

greatest amusements. On further reflecting on my past errors on the divine mercy, and on my own situation, I thought it my duty to offer up to Heaven my last sacrifice. I had by me a miniature picture of Don Pedro, which had become more precious to me ever since the birth of my Alphonsine, and which I intended to give her; but on this memorable day which brought to my recollection in so lively a manner the bounty of Heaven, and the miracles which divine goodness had wrought in my favour, I reflected that I ought not to look, in the state of penitence in which I was, on the profane pledge of a criminal passion. The next morning, while my daughter was yet asleep, I went to my oratory, and throwing myself on my

bending

bending knees, I offered up to Heaven this last sacrifice as a homage of gratitude; then getting upon the mossy seat, I extended my arm and threw the picture towards that part of the fountain where it divided into two streams, falling with great noise behind the huge massy rocks, whence the picture, carried away by the stream, disappeared among the rocks.—This sacrifice cost me much; but in satisfying my conscience I assured to myself a still greater tranquillity.

Eight months had now elapsed since I had seen my daughter, and I resolved to see her that very evening; only for five minutes, promising myself never to look at her but on her birth-day, and that for so short a time. On laying her down, I put

put a bandage about her eyes, on which she cried. My heart was rent, thinking that I was unnecessarily tormenting her. I conceived myself to be a barbarian in causing those tears, only to gratify my own pleasure: I immediately took off the bandage, and laid myself down; she still continued crying, till at length I appeased her by my caresses: when she fell asleep I was still sitting by the side of the bed, holding one of her little hands in my own. In about half an hour I felt her hand starting twice; I immediately recollected that she had still an eye-tooth to cut, and that she had taken the breast but little in the course of the day; her hand seemed extremely hot, and I fancied that she was convulsed. "Inspire "me, my God!" exclaimed I; and my

daughter

daughter half awake repeated, *my God!* Her little voice, so tender and in so lamentable a tone, pierced me to the soul. —I then again took the bandage, and tied it about her eyes, and concealing myself behind the tapestry, I lighted up a taper which I placed in my dark lantern; I then took up one of my physical books and read the article entitled, *on the Convulsions of Children*, which began thus: *The first thing to do is to carry the child into the air, to open the window, as without this precaution the child might perhaps perish in a few minutes.* On reading those lines, so terrible to me, I felt my blood chilled in my veins: never till this moment had I felt all the horrors of that spot which I inhabited. However, it was necessary that something should be

be done; I thought that the air which penetrated the cavern, near the fountain, would perhaps supply the place of the open air, and taking my child, which seemed to me to be in a kind of lethargy, I placed it upon a cushion, and prepared a draught for her according to the receipt which I found in the book: I had a great deal of trouble to make her swallow it, but at length I accomplished it.—Shortly after, I perceived her motionless, and her face seemed to turn frightfully pale, while her pulse was extremely weak. I had now nothing else to do but to wait the effects of the draught: "She "will die," said I, casting about my frantic looks, "she will die, and I am "not able to call in any assistance! De- "prived of the sight of her for eight "months,

" months, I only behold her when dying!
" —Alas! I have possessed her but a
" few moments to feel the torments of
" loving beyond all measure; of seeing
" her expire in my arms, to dig myself
" her grave in this frightful abyss, and
" to close it with my own hands. Ah!
" what do I say? O thou most just and
" bounteous God! pardon the mur-
" muring of my heart and my lips! in
" giving me this child in this dreadful
" dungeon, you have prescribed to me
" to devote myself only to her; you have
" exacted from me a thousand times the
" love that you have demanded of other
" mothers: deign to pardon this mater-
" nal wandering; I ever submit to thy
" equitable will; it is thy child, and if
" thy will be that it should be reunited to
" the

" the more happy host of angels, ought
" I to afflict myself? Life to her never
" was a painful journey: she obtained
" happiness the very instant of her exist-
" ence; she never knew the evils of life,
" never felt the anguish of an unfortu-
" nate mother: oh! if I could but ima-
" gine that her sufferings would be equal
" to mine for one day, I should hap-
" pily support the idea of her death.
" ... Oh, my child! how indifferent
" shall I be to my own fate, when I am
" sure that you are happy! If it be pos-
" sible that I can survive you, I will
" never complain: I should say, she is
" happy; insensible to all sublunary
" events, my soul, as it were, detached
" from the earth, will follow you to your
" abode of bliss. I shall rejoice at your

" hap-

" happiness, and certain of rejoining you,
" shall wait mute and resigned on your
" grave the moment which is to unite us."

In pronouncing these words my eyes were fixed on my daughter: I saw that her mouth was half opened, and lips quite pale; I trembled all over, thinking that she was nearly expiring. " Oh," exclaimed I, " my last hope on earth is
" gone to forsake me for ever, and I am
" fixed here for the remaining term of
" my life in this frightful state of an-
" guish and inexpressible grief. All
" my projects have vanished, and all my
" hopes are extinguished. Time will
" now no longer pass to me but in slow
" succession to my grave; it will pro-
" duce no changes in my fate, and no
" new

" new sentiment in my heart. I have
" nothing of sensibility left me, but to
" suffer and to grieve: no, I shall never
" see again the light of Heaven, and am
" only desirous to die on thy grave.—
" Alas, thy last looks could not behold
" thy unfortunate mother! I never saw
" thy visage but covered with the sha-
" dow of death.". . . . This distressing
thought violently tempted me to take off
the bandage from her eyes while she still
was breathing; but I was prevented by
the idea of the shock which she would
experience on perceiving the light in her
last moments. While I was still hesita-
ting, she began to move; I trembled—
she extended her arms, and a sweet ray
of hope again reanimated my distracted
soul. I lifted up my hands towards
Heaven,

Heaven, but no human language can express what I felt. I only pronounced these words: "O ye ministers of Hea-
" ven! speak, pray for me." My child now began to cry; and on looking at her, and somewhat removing the bandage, I saw that she had again recovered her natural colour; I embraced her with all the transports of happiness; I pressed her to my bosom, and bathed her with my tears: I felt her pulse, and found it was less weak, and prostrating myself exclaimed, " Vain is the assistance of art,
" I shall no more regret its want. . . .
" Almighty Heaven! it is you who sup-
" ply my every want: you watch and
" reign here; I stand not in need of the
" advice and science of wise men. I im-
" plore you, and you answer me; in this
" happy

" happy seclusion, in this profound
" silence, I know you have listened to
" me, and restored again my child. Yes,
" I heard you say, O my protector
" and only Father, ' You are under my
" ' particular care; be but submissive,
" ' and fear nothing.'" In pronouncing
these words with the most enthusiastic
gratitude, and the most lively joy, I took
up my child upon my knees, who seem-
ed to be very weak, but no longer in pain;
and while I kissed her with transports,
she made me amends for all I had suf-
fered this frightful night: she threw one
of her little arms about my neck, she
embraced me and smiled . . . Oh, how
enchanting was this smile to me, after
so much uneasiness and anguish! I laid
my daughter down on the bed, leaving

my lamp burning in the oratory, and then laid down myself. My happiness so intoxicated me that it deprived me of sleep for some time. I reflected on my situation, but it was with new sentiments. I thanked heaven for having snatched me from all worldly pleasures to give me an existence somewhat spiritual. I now only lived to adore, and serve my Creator, to love and foster my daughter; noble avocation, consecrated to afafection and piety! The next day, I examined the mouth of my child, and perceived, with inexpressible satisfaction, that her last tooth had completely cut through, and on the following day she was in perfect health. I suckled her every-day, but I began to give her some other nourishment besides, in order that

 she

she might be weaned the more easily, in case any accident should prevent my giving her the breast. It is not at all to be wondered at, that at my age I should conduct myself with such prudence, as if I had been a perfect nurse, for, during a lapse of eighteen months, all my study and all my thoughts had nothing but my infant for their object; and thus practice, reflection, and maternal tenderness supplied in me the place of experience.

Don Sancho had been absent, or feigned to be so, nearly fifteen months, and I had lived in total darkness already more than a year, and I did not doubt that he would at length be tired of a passion so unhappy and so ferocious. I was so indignant at the last act of cruelty which

which was exercised against me, that, not expecting any thing further from his protection, I felt a great pleasure in thinking that he had abandoned me, and that I should never see him again; for since the birth of Leonora I mortally feared every sort of visits, and above all, those of Don Sancho.

One morning as I went, according to custom, to the wicket, I perceived with astonishment, about a hundred paces from me, a feeble ray of light: I hurried forward, and I found in the basket a lantern containing a lighted candle: By the side of the lantern was a letter, which I recognised to be the hand-writing of Don Sancho: I opened it tremblingly, and read the following contents:

 "I AM

" I AM just arrived, and have learnt
" with horror the cruelty to which you
" have been exposed; I am told, how-
" ever, that this barbarity was occasi-
" oned by an apprehension of which I
" shall inform you. My affairs are for-
" tunately settled, and you are free!—
" Your marriage has been disannulled,
" and the Count is going to be married
" to another lady,—at six o'clock in the
" evening I shall throw myself at your
" feet."

This letter, which caused me the greatest alarm, did not at all change my opinion with respect to Don Sancho, that he was privy to my having been deprived of light now for upwards of a year. But I, however, felt the necessity of dissembling;

sembling; I was now less than ever inclined to confide a secret to Don Sancho, which was a thousand times more dear to me than life, and I shuddered at the thought that he, perhaps, now would discover it. I took every precaution to prevent this misfortune. I sent my dog out of the chamber, to run about the cavern, and I remained with my child until half past five o'clock; I then gave her the breast, and put her to sleep; then rising, I proceeded into the cave of the fountain; as I entered I heard Azor barking . . . . the moment after Don Sancho made his appearance, I was extremely struck at the extraordinary change visible in his person; I saw that in persecuting me, he had himself suffered: he was much agitated, and trembled exceedingly.

ingly. He seated himself, made an attempt to speak, but the words expired on his lips. He then turned pale in a frightful manner; then putting his hands to his eyes, "No," said he, "the sight "of you is insupportable to me!"—he was nearly fainting—he hung his head upon his shoulder, and his eyes closed.—I rose precipitately; I took a little water from the fountain in a jug, with which I sprinkled his face, and I supported him,—he seemed ready to sink to the earth: he opened his eyes; "Heaven," said he, "is it you who support me?" He then endeavoured to get up, but sunk back on his mossy seat, and after a moment's silence, "Do not believe," said he in a ferocious tone, "that I am to be moved by "this deceitful compassion of yours—

"you

" you far exceed me in cruelty—it is im-
" possible to exist in the situation where
" you are without being sustained by
" every exaltation of a violent passion.
" You live here by hatred and vengeance;
" you know that I am dying, that you
" are the cause—and this idea seems to
" give you supernatural courage!" At
these words I raised my hands towards
heaven, " Oh! Don Sancho," answered
I, " far from hating you, I feel a lively
" interest in your behalf.—' Gracious hea-
" ven! but wherefore?'—' Because you
" are my only hope and will be my de-
" liverer.'—' Ah! if I may believe that
" you speak the truth, that you esteem
" me!—but no, it's past—you abhor
" and despise me.' He pronounced
these words in a tone, and with such ex-

 pression,

pression, which convinced me that he was seriously affected. "Reflect," exclaimed I, "on all that I have "suffered for a whole year — de-"prived of light; alone in this fright-"ful abode; and you now, without im-"posing any conditions, without exact-"ing any promise, will, actuated by a "generous return to virtue, restore me "to light and to life, and deliver me "from bondage. Come," — In pronouncing these words, I took hold of his trembling hand; he started, rose, and walked a few paces with me. I now thought myself at liberty, and was about to confide my secret to him, and to place my infant in his arms, when he suddenly stopped and said, "How! at this very "moment?"—"Yes, do not defer it."—

"That's

" That's impossible; I am locked up
" along with you in this cavern, Leonora
" has got the key, and will not come
" back for me in less than an hour; she
" and the count are at the door, and if I
" do not by that time return with the in-
" strument signed in your hand-writing,
" the villain will be ready to stab you.
" You shall be avenged — but — "
" Enough of that," said I, " let us
" think no more about it; I entreat you
" let me die here in peace."—" Come,"
said he, in a frantic tone, " I will plunge
" my sword into his breast — if I cannot
" deliver you without a crime, what does
" it matter? I am sick of life. . . .
" Away with such frightful language!—
" Diana, give me your hand—I demand
" it: are you not in my power?—You

 " wish

" wish to *die here in peace!*—These
" words have roused within me all my
" resentment—no, I will not suffer you
" to enjoy that repose of which you have
" deprived me for ever.—Am I not the
" absolute master of your fate? Audaci-
" ous and weak creature! could not
" force give me that which I solicit for
" in vain? You prefer this cavern and
" eternal darkness to my offers and my
" love; and could I for a moment have
" suffered myself to be seduced! had I
" been able to deliver you at that instant
" I should have done it, and should have
" lost you for ever, and should have
" ceased being the arbiter of your fate...
" No, no, away with foolish pity—con-
" sent to be my wife, or fear every thing
" from my hatred and despair."

During

During this terrific discourse my hair stood an end; I was forced to conceal my emotion, and, assuming a calm tone, "No, no, Don Sancho," said I, "I "do not fear you; I know you better "than you know yourself. Your wan-"dering soul is nevertheless not abject; "and, though alone with you in this "dungeon; alone, without strength, "without defence; forsaken by all na-"ture, still, I do not fear you." In pronouncing these words I approached and offered him my hand; he fell down at my feet, and burst into tears. He said to me, in the most persuasive language, every thing that generosity or passion could dictate. It was impossible for me to depend upon a man whose sentiments were so variable; I endeavoured in my

answer not to irritate him, but I did not deceive him: I repeated to him that I had resolved never to be married again, and that even supposing I had not made such a vow, nothing in life should determine me tamely to submit to violence, and to form so sacred a union under such gloomy auspices. He listened to me with a melancholy air, after which he remained nearly a quarter of an hour plunged in a deep reverie: at length he arose, muttered a few words which I did not understand, and left me. I was, as it were, relieved from a frightful load when I saw him go. After a few minutes I followed him slowly, without a candle, to assure myself of his departure; I perceived him at a distance, holding his lanthorn, and I continued to follow him. At length I stopped and con-

cealed myself behind a corner of a wall; I soon heard the door of the cavern open, and the noise which it made caused me the greatest joy. Thus, I once again became sole mistress of that spot which contained every thing that was dear to me in life; and, by the supreme power of maternal affection, that noise of locks and bolts, so terrible to the ears of all prisoners, produced in me a most delightful sensation. I flew to my chamber, my daughter had just awoke, crying and calling out for me; and I took her up with as much joy as if she had been torn from me for many days. Ever since the day that she had been ill my milk was gone, and the effect of Don Sancho's visit totally prevented me from giving her the breast: it therefore became necessary that I should wean her; she was now fourteen

fourteen months old: I fed her with the milk which, was every day brought me by Leonora, and she suffered nothing from this change.

The next day I received the following letter from Don Sancho:

"For twenty-one months, while you
"have suffered, I have been dying....
"It is at length necessary that something
"conclusive should be decided on: I
"will no more come to see you; you
"will seduce me, and I know that I shall
"not be able to withstand your seduc-
"tion—I have already told you ... and
"must repeat it, that if you persist in
"your refusal, I cannot prevent their
"depriving you of light; and now, I
"must

" must inform you of what I forgot to
" mention yesterday on this subject. I
" must first remind you, that about a
" year ago I sent you some perfumes.
" On the evening of that day, according
" to my custom, I went up a secret path
" which I had cut myself, in the rock
' that forms the roof of your cavern;
" there, concealed under the cypress
" trees and bushes, I fancied, in the si-
" lence of the night, that I should be
" able to hear and see you . . . Seated on
" the rock, on that part of it which forms
" the roof of the grotto of the foun-
" tain, knowing that you passed your
" evenings there, consecrated to piety...
" on a sudden, by the silver light of the
" moon, I perceived a feeble smoke which
" issued from the fissures of the rock,
" while

" while at the same time the air became
" perfumed with the most delicious
" odours. I guessed, that at that mo-
" ment you were burning the perfumes
" which you had received from me.—You
" had not disdained my gifts; that idea
" intoxicated me — I inhaled with de-
" light the odoriferous vapour! . . . thus
" this homage paid to love, sanctified
" by you, came from your hand as a
" pure incense, offered up to the Deity;
" and, spite of your persecutors, it pierc-
" ed the thick-vaulted roof of your pri-
" son, and ascended freely up to hea-
" ven.—I prostrated myself on the rock,
" in order to be enabled better to receive
" this divine emanation . . . and, while
" you were forming those vows so con-
" trary to my love, and imploring divine
" vengeance

" vengeance on my devoted head, wil-
" ling to unite myself to you, at least in
" sentiment, I hated myself—while you
" were weeping, I bathed the rock with
" my scalding tears.—Seized, as it were,
" by a new enthusiasm, I ventured to
" pray with you. I adored, tremblingly,
" that Being, of whose power your vir-
" tue was a proof; and said, from the
" bottom of my heart,—Yes, heaven
" protect her there against me, and
" grant that Diana may be happy! Ah,
" were you but capable of love, you
" would be overpowered by the truth,
" and the excess of such a passion. Do
" not think that a vicious heart could
" adore you with so much constancy; I
" loved you to distraction from the first
" moment I beheld you.—You were but
" fifteen

" fifteen years of age; report spoke of
" you as not being yet handsome: ah!
" but how did you appear in my sight?
" You had already your severe and se-
" rene looks; your heavenly counte-
" nance, that dignified deportment, seri-
" ous and mild; that enchanting voice!
" When you, after that, became the
" greatest beauty at court, I was the only
" person that was not struck with it;
" because I could love you no more
" than I had done.—But how is it that
" you still retain your beauty?—What
" do I say? since your imprisonment you
" have acquired new charms; misfor-
" tune has given you all the dignity of a
" maturer age: your form, deprived of
" all the vain ornaments of art, is majes-
" tic and simple—But where am I hurry-
" ing

" ing to? I wanted to speak to you of
" the smoke which produced the per-
" fume; as long as it lasted I remained
" on the rock. The count, surprised at
" my absence, and knowing that I was
" incessantly wandering about the ca-
" vern, came to seek me, he called me,
" and I descended. I was so struck
" with what I had just experienced, that
" I related it to the Count; he made no
" answer, but being naturally very sus-
" picious, he made the most frightful re-
" flections on this incident, thinking that
" this smoke would easily be perceived
" issuing from the rock, and naturally
" excite some curiosity; and as soon as
" I was gone, he for several nights re-
" moved a great quantity of earth on the
" rock; but fearing that he had not
" stopped

" stopped up all the crevices, he ordered
" Leonora to give you no more light. I
" was unacquainted with this cruelty un-
" til my arrival, and this thought proved
" insupportable to me. In what a horri-
" ble situation must you have been for
" a whole year! Oh, Diana! take pity
" on yourself, on your youth, on your
" beauty: 'tis you that slay me, and if
" I die, be assured that hatred and ven-
" geance will employ the most refined
" atrocities to increase your sufferings.—
" Grates and walls may be demolished,
" and entered ... therefore, depend on
" it, your persecutors will endeavour to
" conceal a crime which nothing can
" excuse. — It is love, not remorse,
" which brings me to your cavern, while
" terror keeps your cowardly tyrant at a
" distance

" distance.—One evening being induced
" by me to approach the door, he fan-
" cied he heard your groans; I saw him
" step back, turning pale.—' Do you not
" ' hear her voice?' said he.—'Ah! would
" ' to heaven,' exclaimed I, ' though I
" ' heard her curse me!'—Oh, you will
" be lost Diana, if I cease to exist,
" you are lost! . . . he even dreads the
" smothered echo of that deep dungeon
" . . . he thinks that nothing but the
" grave is silent. Reflect well on that.
" Ah, do not become the victim of a
" monster! I again repeat to you, I
" wish only to hold the title of husband,
" the right of being your defender, to
" throw my fortune at your feet, and
" devote my whole life to your service.

" I shall

" I shall await your answer as the last
" decree which must fix both our dooms
" for ever . . . Ah! guilty as I am, how
" noble, how enviable is that destiny in
" which yours depends!"

It was not without terror as well as emotion that I read and answered this letter: my note contained nothing but a repetition of what I had many times written and said before, Leonora brought me this last answer:

" The door of your cavern is to be
" walled up to-night . . . they mistrust
" my weakness, perhaps with reason . . .
" all that I have been able to obtain is,
" that you shall not be totally deprived
" of light . . . I ought to fly and abandon

" you:

" you: with what perseverance have
" you braved me? . . . You wish my
" death . . . you shall be satisfied. —
" That lamp that lights you, that lamp,
" which they allow you at my earnest
" injunction, will be extinguished as
" soon as I have breathed my last . . .
" you will be deprived of it when I am
" no longer there to protect you! Thus
" my death will deprive you of your only
" consolation, and plunge you, spite of
" yourself as it were, into mourning
" and grief: thus, when my eyes shall
" for ever be closed to the light of day,
" yours shall for ever be deprived of light
" also; and your beauty, no longer re-
" flected to your own sight, shall be co-
" vered with an eternal veil, and wrap-
" ped for ever in darkness. —What fatal
" bond

" bond is it that, spite of the disunion
" of our hearts, still seems to join and
" confound our destinies together. —I'll
" remain here! — I'll die on the rock of
" the cavern. — Farewell, Diana . . .
" farewell: my broken soul has lost all
" its force and energy, I am no longer
" angry; I am bereft of hope, love
" alone supports and animates yet my
" drooping frame! . . . I love and I die
" . . . this is all I know.—I can neither
" repent, avenge myself, release you
" from this place, nor leave you here."

" As long as I shall exist, a word, a
" single word, will beat down the wall
" which parts us; and remember, that
" without that word, which would re-
" store

" store me to life, that horrid wall will
" close up your funeral monument."

This letter, like all others from Don Sancho, had a truth and force of expression and sentiment which caused in me an extreme emotion.—In order that I might not be inclined to compassionate that unaccountable man, I was obliged to reflect on my own situation, and recall to mind with what perfidy and cruelty he had abused my confidence to drag me hither, and precipitate me down into the lowest abyss of human miseries. One reflection, in particular, inspired me with the most violent resentment against him. I had formerly an opportunity of knowing his personal courage, which indeed bordered on temerity; and was therefore

 certain,

certain, that, if he tolerated the Count's cruel proceedings towards me, it must be from his thinking them likely to promote his own views. I knew that he possessed over the Count all that ascendancy, which acknowledged bravery and splendid atchievements cannot fail to procure; so that whenever Don Sancho feigned to fear the Count, such dissimulation on his part could not but irritate me, and in his sudden moments of enthusiastic sensibility he then belied his usual system of fear. I was confident that, with taking the necessary precautions, in order not to expose the Count, and not to make a public scene of my release, he might have become the sole arbiter of my fate, and have restored to me unconditional liberty. Notwithstanding his

his natural impetuosity, and the strange inconsistency of his disposition, he was capable of an indefatigable perseverance. He had sworn he would force me to give him my hand, and I but too well knew that the faintest hope of one day obtaining it, would support his constancy during a great number of years. I had taken, before God, a solemn engagement never to marry, except with the father of my child. Besides, ever since the birth of Alphonsine, the remembrance of Don Pedro had become dearer to me than before; and nature seemed to have consecrated my former weakness. It was not the passionate lover I took pleasure in recollecting, but the tender father I loved to represent to my mind. I knew Don Pedro's generous and affectionate soul,

 and

and my heart gave him credit for all the affection which he could not fail to bear his daughter, if heaven ever reserved me the supreme happiness of placing her in his arms.

Thus Don Sancho, even had he behaved nobly by me, and restored me to my liberty without any conditions, could not have obtained from my admiration and gratitude what his cruel persecutions could not wring from me. I was no longer mistress of my own fate; my daughter alone had the right to dispose of it; my wishes, my projects, in short all my undertakings had her alone for their object. The threat of closing up the door of my cave did not alarm me in the least; my first reflection was, that I should

should be sheltered from all those visits which had caused me so much terror; my daughter seemed, as it were, more secure in my power, and we both more immediately left under the divine protection. But on a second thought my soul was appalled at the horror of such complete seclusion from living nature.—I tried to banish those gloomy ideas, and to think only on the importance of my secret, which by this new act of rigour would thus be secured for a long time at least; and, as to futurity, I resolved to rely on divine Providence alone.

In order to ascertain whether they really would wall up the door, I passed the whole night near the stairs, seated on a stone, with my dog in my lap. At

 midnight

midnight Azor barked . . . I listened, and I heard steps on the stairs . . . soon I distinguished those of two or three persons, who must have been Don Sancho, the Count, and Leonora.—I shuddered on the sudden recollection, that a thin board alone now parted me from the Count . . . they did not speak, but I clearly heard bricks and mortar placed against the door. I thought on those words in Don Sancho's last letter, *remember that this wall will close up your tomb* . . . and the idea made me tremble. Their work did not last above a quarter of an hour, and I wondered at its being so soon terminated. I learnt since, that Don Sancho, who only wished to frighten me, had erected but a very slight partition before the door, such as a blow from

a hammer

a hammer would have knocked down. The next day I lighted a candle, in order to go and examine the wicket, and I perceived with sorrow that the aperture had been made infinitely smaller. They still allowed me some candles, but in very small quantities. They curtailed me of oil for my night lamp, and had I lighted my tapers without interruption they would not have lasted above seven or eight hours out of the twenty-four; but I made use of them only during one hour and half every evening, which I employed exclusively in reading medical books and sacred poems, in my native language and in French; for I was desirous of one day teaching my daughter to speak a number of lines. I was supplied with all the books I asked for; and whenever I wrote

it was in the dark, in order to save my tapers; besides, I found a great advantage in this, namely, that of not quitting my child when I wrote; only I took the precaution every evening, by candle light, to read over again what I had written in the course of the day, in order to make such corrections as were necessary.

My health was extremely bad during the first three months after I had weaned my daughter. I experienced violent pains in my head, and certain nervous complaints, which troubled me particularly during the night. Notwithstanding the excess of my woes, I was more attached to life than it is possible to be in any other situation. My daughter could not exist without me—I therefore took

most

most particular care of my health, and was apt to form some alarming apprehensions in this respect, which medical books contributed but too much to increase. I fancied I had about me the symptoms of almost every complaint which I read of. I first thought my milk had formed an abscess; then that I should have the dropsy; and at last persuaded myself I had a polypus at my heart.

These ideas, which haunted me, particularly during the night, greatly aggravated my sorrows. I started in my bed; I felt strange palpitations in my head, accompanied with a difficulty of breathing; then I felt myself so extremely hot, as if I had a fever, and dreaded lest my daughter should

catch it; then I fancied I should find it impossible to rise and crawl to the wicket to fetch our food: I represented to myself my daughter begging for her accustomed food and necessary cares.—Without the help of religion I should not have been able to support the horror of these distracting thoughts; they must have finally undermined my constitution, or impaired my reason; but I invoked the Almighty, and found some relief, and a few hours sleep restored to me part of my strength. I wrote a sort of last will, recommending my daughter to Don Sancho's care and protection, being confident that, in case of my death, he would have become her most zealous defender. I sealed up this paper, and resolved, if I should feel myself grow worse, to carry

it

it about me at all times, and when I felt my state hopeless, to send for Don Sancho, and deliver to him this important writing. This idea, which had suggested to me some chance of yet saving my daughter, contributed greatly to my recovery. A cooling and wholesome regimen calmed the effervescence of my blood: I still remained subject to some nervous affections and pains in my head, but I recovered my sleep and strength, and this experience somewhat soothing my apprehensions respecting my health, preserved me from all those torturing anxieties which our imagination is apt at times to produce.

My daughter was twenty months old, she walked, she spoke, and understood

all that I told her, either in Spanish or French. She had no vivacity or hilarity of disposition, but she evinced an extreme sensibility; she caressed me in the most affectionate manner; would always keep one of her little hands between mine, and when she did not feel me near her she became uneasy, and fancied we were separated from each other. It was only while I held her on my knees that I succeeded to make her play; she began to take notice of Azor, whom she seemed to love, and that was already something. She laughed but seldom, and not with that open, hearty, and noisy tone which other infants generally indulge in; laughter seemed with her rather a sort of mechanical motion, which seemed an exertion to her, and by a singular

gular effect of instinct left an impression of melancholy on her, particularly after her first infancy was over. The moment a feeble titter had escaped her, she reclined her head on my shoulder, sighed, and remained for some time motionless in that attitude. One of the things which seemed to please her the most was to hear me talk. I told her little stories, suitably adapted to her understanding, and she listened with rapture. I was always obliged to meditate for a considerable time in order to compose these little tales, in order that I might not introduce any thing but what was conformable to our situation, and the state of ignorance in which I wished her to remain as long as our confinement should last. I observed the same precautions with respect

to

to the poetry, which I taught her by heart; I was obliged to make a careful selection, to reject many lines, to change some expressions in those which I wished her to recollect. I had the inexpressible joy to find that her health made daily improvements, for which blessing I poured out to heaven the most sincere and grateful thanks. I had succeeded to make her some shoes, by cutting mine smaller and sewing them up again. Had I been at liberty to procure all the articles which she was in want of, I should have been deprived of a great satisfaction, namely, that of contriving and making them up myself.

Don Sancho still kept writing to me about once a week, but I never answered

him,

him, except when I had something to ask for, which he never refused me. On the anniversary of my daughter's birth-day I received some fruit, and a repeater, which I had long been desirous of having, my clock being out of order. With what delightful emotions did I hear, on the evening of the first of November, that hour strike when she came into the world! I was holding her in my arms at the time; she was two years old! The next day I gave her some fruit, which she had never tasted before, and some new play-things of my own invention.—This proved a festival day for her. I had gradually accustomed her to submit to having a band tied round her eyes at going to bed; so that notwithstanding my former resolutions, I had the pleasure to

look

look at her for a few minutes every evening as she lay asleep. This winter proved colder than I had ever felt it before; and we experienced the difference very strongly, although the cave was generally cool during the summer, and warm during the winter. In the month of February my daughter caught a very severe cold, which alarmed me exceedingly. When she recovered I fell sick myself, and the obligation of going to the wicket every second day, protracted my illness until the month of May. I then learnt from Leonora, to whom I spoke at the wicket, that she had kept her bed for about a fortnight, during which Don Sancho had taken upon himself the care of providing me with food. I then entreated Leonora to supply me with a good

stock

stock of provisions, not only for a few days, as she had done on some former occasions, but with enough to last me for several months; and I took care to accompany my request with my last sixty remaining ducats, and had the pleasure of obtaining Leonora's consent accordingly. She came every day during a space of six weeks, and brought me two baskets every time instead of one; she also supplied me with a great quantity of gingerbread, sea-biscuit, excellent wine, choice fruits, syrup, confectionary, sugar, chocolate, &c. &c. She had proposed to me herself, sometime before, to provide me with this large stock of provisions, unknown to the Count and Don Sancho, but had told me that it would require some time to collect it from the

stores

stores in the castle, which were under her care. She promised me, moreover, henceforth to keep supplying me with a greater quantity of provisions than was immediately necessary, in order that I might successively lay up a good stock.

I now had become the most unfortunate as well as the most happy of mothers. My daughter, who had now attained her thirty-second month, looked considerably better than children generally do at that age. Her extreme attachment to me had given her that intelligence of mind, far superior to that which is produced only by a lively disposition. All children are fond of their mothers who nurse them; but that of my daughter was infinitely more strong and

and lively than that of any other. Nothing had diverted her feelings from me; she had received no embraces but mine; heard no person speak but me; had never gone to sleep but in my arms or on my bosom; I was truly the whole world to her. For fear of giving me pain, she never cried, or if she wept, it was so softly that I never knew it but by feeling her wet cheeks. Whenever I passed some minutes without speaking, she always fancied that I was also weeping in silence; she then lifted up her little hands to my face, and if she found some tears, she clung round my neck, exclaiming, "O, "Mamma! do not cry!"—Her general melancholy pierced my soul; and often, in order to dispel it, I was strongly tempted to restore her the use of light; I pictured

pictured to myself the surprise and transports of joy which she would experience on beholding the light ; and a thousand times I was on the point of yielding to the temptation. But for the last eighteen months my supply of tapers had been so scanty, that I had laid up but a very small store, which it was necessary to preserve against cases of urgent necessity. Besides, I was aware that from one moment to another vengeance or resentment might deprive me of that little ; indeed I had good reason to expect it ; and therefore repeatedly bethought myself that, for the sake of giving my daughter a temporary gratification, I should at once lose the fruit of my prudence and care, and thus render her situation infinitely more deplorable ; for I was persuaded

suaded, that a child confined in a cavern would not be able to bear the being deprived of such a comfort without extreme grief. These reflections restrained the desire. How much did I afterwards applaud myself for this forbearance!—One day, as my Alphonsine was at play with Azor, I, for the first time, heard her kissing him repeatedly. No expression can describe what were my feelings at hearing this; my heart was deeply wounded. The object of all my thoughts, of all my love, was bestowing on another being what I conceived belonged exclusively to myself . . . and thus prostituting her innocent endearments she deprived me of a part of that happiness which remained for me in this world. Since the day of her birth I had not once taken

taken that notice of my dog; and had, though unconsciously, preserved unimpaired a sort of maternal fidelity to my daughter. I wished her to be guided by filial instinct, as I was by maternal love; but this was an unnatural desire. I reproached her, but in the most tender manner, when she immediately began to cry, embraced me, and pushed Azor from her. I now felt a new pain, as she would no more play with him: the idea that my ridiculous susceptibility had deprived her of an amusement, made me severely repent it. She, however, at length became reconciled at my taking Azor on my lap, and reasoning her, as it were, out of her resolution, she began playing with him again, but assured me she would never kiss him again; which

promise

promise she religiously observed ever after. I did not blush on account of that strange jealousy, it proceeding from a weakness occasioned by my love; and how could I reproach myself with that, which my extreme tenderness was a sufficient excuse for? But I felt true remorse on considering it a sort of selfishness.—It was about this time that the letters of Don Sancho assumed a frightful misanthropic style; hitherto I had always found in them some traits of passion and sensibility, but now they breathed nothing but a gloomy despair, and a concentrated resentment; and I plainly foresaw that some violent storm was gathering around me, and was ready to burst forth. He soon after left off writing to me, and I was more than two months without hearing

hearing his name mentioned. My daugh-was now about three years and five months old, and I had inhabited the cavern about four years. My Alphonsine enjoyed a good state of health; she was blessed with such a mild disposition, that not even the slightest rebuke from me had ever disturbed the uniformity of her tranquil mind. I saw with pleasure that as she advanced in age she became accustomed to this singular and monotonous life; the happiness of loving and being beloved was better felt and better tasted by her, and supplied the place of all the amusements of which she was deprived. Always of a melancholy turn, she never cried without a cause; and an expression, simply less tender than what she was accustomed to hear from me, seemed, to

her,

her a severe reproof. Then would her tears flow; she was naturally silent, and, as I said before, seemed never tired of hearing me speak. I had availed myself of this angelic mildness to inculcate an habitual obedience from her earliest infancy, and nothing can equal her ready submission to all my wishes. She now no longer followed me when I went to the wicket, but I placed her on a cushion in my chamber, and was sure on my return to find her there in the same attitude in which I had seated her. It is true she sometimes burst into tears if I staid longer than usual; but when she heard my steps at a great distance, on my return she would call to me by the most tender names, and would burst forth in the most lively and affecting transports.

transports. She felt it, however, less painful to obey me in this respect; for, as she never walked without holding me by the hand, she was always extremely frightened to go, though but a few steps, alone.

One evening, having returned from the wicket, as I was taking the provisions out of the basket, I felt there was a letter in it: as it had been now a long time that I had not received any, I was curious to read it; and, instead of waiting till the evening, I lighted a taper and went to my oratory. This letter was from Don Sancho, couched in the following terms:

" You have prevailed; and I am
" borne down by the oppressive load of
" four

" four years sufferings—but I will not
" terminate my miserable existence on the
" mass of rocks which separate me from
" you. No, I will not die an exile in that
" detested country which you no longer
" inhabit. I renounce the light of that
" sun which no more illuminates your
" abode; I abandon for ever those dis-
" mal groves whose foliage you will never
" more behold, and those barren paths
" where the traces of your steps no
" longer will be seen: yet I quit no-
" thing; the universe is but a desert to
" me, and thus it has appeared for the
" last four years. It is in the dungeon,
" at your feet, that I wish to breathe my
" last; it is but just that I should pre-
" sent to your sight so gratifying a spec-
" tacle, and that your persecutor should

" at length become your victim. What
" have you gained by being enveloped
" in that abyss to shelter yourself from
" my love? I will follow you into that
" very grave in which I plunged you,
" that at least we may be united in death!
" Barbarous and ungrateful woman! you
" glory in my despair, and render me as
" ferocious as I am miserable. But you
" shall not escape me; you shall at last
" reward my torments, my crimes, and
" that insupportable slavery of a useless
" and tedious patience. Yes, we will
" perish together. You will no longer
" behold me that trembling and pas-
" sionate lover, that timid tyrant who
" oppresses you but with regret, and who
" incessantly disguised his rigorous treat-
" ment by a pusillanimous dissimulation,

" or

"or by his generous offers which you
"constantly disdained to accept: no,
"you shall now find me an imperious
"and irritated master. . . . No more dis-
"sembling, no more foolish pity, no
"more respect.—With all your deceit-
"ful mildness you are implacable in
"your resentments, and you shall find
"me inflexible in my vengeance. I will
"disturb that insulting tranquillity which
"you pride yourself to enjoy, while my
"wretched days are fleeting hence in
"shame and despair. I will ravish from
"you that repose which has so long
"brayed me; in short, two hours hence
"I will enclose with you, never to leave
"you again until the last moments of
"my life, to reconduct you into the
"world, or to die with you in the dun-

"geon. The unfortunate object of your
"contempt has now no other hope re-
"maining but in his energy, fury, and
"violence . . . and you must this day
"become either his wife or his prey."

I was so much agitated when I finished this letter, that the horrible epistle dropped from my hand.—"O Heavens!" exclaimed I, "be my protector! human "laws no longer exist for me; behold "me given up to a monster who decrees "my destruction! O merciful Heaven, "confound his impious design, protect "my infant, and save me!" Having said these words, I went to my daughter, and desired her to be quiet, as I should be absent for some time, and I gave her all her play-things, and a small basket of fruit.

fruit. I then, on my bended knees, gave her my blessing, and again recommended her to the protection of Heaven.—With what heartfelt distraction did I then embrace her, thinking I should perhaps never see her again, and that it was possible that I should be stabbed in the frightful struggle which I had to sustain with a monster who had decided to end his life with my own.—Haunted by these dreadful ideas, I was deprived of all thoughts or reflections, and nearly bereft of my senses. Having left my candle in the oratory, I wandered about in the dark, followed by my dog, and trembling at every step: suddenly I heard a violent stroke of a mallet against the door, and I imagined that it was my cruel persecutor who was knocking down the

 brick-

brick-work. . . . . At that my dog, instead of barking, began to howl in a most mournful manner; and some superstitious notions adding to my just fears, I remained for some moments petrified, leaning against the wall. However, wishing to take refuge in my oratory, I crawled as it were along till I arrived near the cavity of the fountain, where I sunk down on a stone. A cold sweat ran down my face; I felt myself fainting, and my frightful fears of losing all power of motion, filled up the measure of all my human woes. I fixed my frantic looks on the entrance of the cave, and I perceived the light of a lantern. I saw the shadow of a terrific figure on the wall; it was that of Don Sancho. I startled, and remained motionless. Beheld,

hold, he appears ! . . . he advances . . . .
while I was bereft of motion as well as
speech : he stood still at the distance of
about ten paces from me, and he was so
much altered that I could scarcely re-
cognize him ; his hair all dishevelled,
his dress all in disorder, his eyes red and
inflamed : the ferocious expressions of
his countenance gave to his person the
most extraordinary and frightful aspect.
After a moment's silence, " You wish-
ed," said he, in a voice half stifled,
" you wished to make a villain of a man
" whose errors are those of an impetu-
" ous passion ; you have accomplished
" your design. You now have your
" choice, either to elevate me to yourself
" by a generous pardon, or to precipitate
" me by your refusal down into the abyss

 " of

" of the worst of crimes.—Do not com-
" plain. What are your sufferings, com-
" pared to mine? It is true I have con-
" fined you in this dungeon; but have I
" not followed you there? Have not my
" heart, my mind, and my soul, always
" inhabited this very spot? And while I
" was wandering a mere shadow on the
" earth, have I not mourned, wept, and
" suffered *here* a thousand times more
" than you? It is true I have caused your
" tears to flow; you have caused me to
" perish.—Pride, hatred, and some other
" fanaticism, have supported and consoled
" you; whilst I had none but you to
" look at, none but you to think of.
" Honour, glory, and virtue, every thing
" which I cherished, were effaced from
" my memory; and I have had, during

" six

" six years, only one ambition, that of
" conquering you; one idea, the inte-
" rest of my passion; and one sentiment,
" which was love. I know we are hence-
" forth irreconcileable: *you* can never
" forgive me the sufferings, the terrors
" which I caused you; *I* can never
" forgive your having been the cause
" of all those crimes which justify your
" hatred; and whether you fall into my
" power by marriage or violence, you
" still will hate me. Thus am I, by you,
" ever doomed to be reprobated; and
" hell itself consumes my heart!"

At this frightful discourse I lost every hope of escaping this horrible and pressing danger: my strength failed me; my sensibility was suspended by terror; I for-

got every thing, and nothing presented itself to me but death and ignominy. My tongue cleaved to my mouth; I became fixed, and almost wished that he had the power of depriving me of life that very instant. After Don Sancho had ceased speaking, he looked at me stedfastly: astonished at my silence, and without doubt struck with my pallid countenance and insensibility: "Heaven!" said he, "fright has robbed me of my victim! Has she lost her faculties, or is she dying?" In saying these words, he sprang forward towards me near the fountain, and sprinkled some water in my face with his hands. At this impetuous motion my crucifix was violently shaken, became loosened, and fell upon me. "Oh! unexpected aid," exclaimed

exclaimed I —" Yes, this shall be my
" shield!" At these words, penetrated
with the most lively faith, seized with a
sacred enthusiasm, and inspired, at it
were, with intrepidity, I grasped my
crucifix with transports, and pressing it
to my bosom, I said, in a firm tone,
" Begone!" Don Sancho, confounded
and dismayed, mechanically stepped
back, but immediately recovering all his
fury, returned to his former place. I
then as swift as lightning took to flight;
Don Sancho, seizing his lantern, pursued
me. By some sudden impulse, and
without doubt inspired by Heaven, I di-
rected my steps towards my chamber.
Don Sancho was on the point of stop-
ping and seizing me, when suddenly a
soft and sonorous voice, the voice of an
angel,

angel, resounded in the cavern, and distinctly pronounced these words: "Mam-"ma! mamma!"—I stopped, and burst into tears: the sound of that darling voice by a powerful charm dispelled, as it were, all the horrors which surrounded me; it effaced from my thoughts every trace, every idea of crime.—I turned myself about, and I beheld Don Sancho with one knee on the ground, at two paces distance from me, holding his lantern in his trembling hand, and by the other supporting himself against the wall, with his mouth half opened, and with his eyes, now softened and full of tears, elevated and fixed towards Heaven; he heard the voice of my deliverer again, repeating, "Mamma!" Don Sancho prostrated himself on the ground, whilst

I again

again breathed and thanked Heaven. After a long silence I took the lantern, and said, " Don Sancho, follow me." He immediately obeyed my summons. When we came to the cave of the fountain, he began to stagger, and at length sunk down upon the mossy seat, hiding his face with his hands. " Don Sancho," said I, shedding a flood of tears, " you " now possess my secret; it is now only " that my life is in your hands."—" O " prodigy of maternal affection!" exclaimed he, " wonderful power of na- " ture! Yes, you surpass every other " sentiment; it is you only who produce " the most sublime virtues! Unfortu- " nate Diana! what have you not en- " dured! . . . you have become a mother " in this cavern?"—" Yes," answered

I, "and my child is near four years old."
—"Dry up your tears," said he with enthusiasm; "you shall be free again
"this very evening. Don Pedro is not
"married; but he has sold all his estates,
"and has disappeared. You are his,
"and we must find him; and I only
"wish to live to deliver into his arms his
"wife and his infant." At these words
I prostrated myself before Don Sancho, and expressed all the gratitude with which I was penetrated. He contemplated me for a moment, thus prostrated at his feet, and exclaimed, "Wonderful Provi-
"dence!" He then raised me, and seating me by his side, he took one of my hands and placed it in his own: his looks, his countenance, his voice, every thing in him was changed; his features, indeed

indeed his whole person, seemed to bear the expression of a calm melancholy and a tenderness which I never before had perceived in him, and which clearly convinced me that a sudden and wonderful revolution was about taking place in his imagination and his heart. "Incom-
"parable woman!" said he, "you are
"now no longer to me that dangerous
"object which destroyed both my rea-
"son and my existence: I now contem-
"plate you as a singular being, who pos-
"sesses nothing terrestrial. Who can
"henceforth cherish a profane passion
"for you? I now console myself for
"those crimes, and for those pangs
"which I suffered, by the new pleasure
"which I enjoy in admiring you without
"measure, and in devoting myself to
"your

" your service. Unworthy to consecrate
" my whole life to you, I'll leave you when
" I can no longer be of service. — Oh,
" that I could but return then to this
" spot, this cavern, where the most
" sublime piety and maternal affection
" have produced so much heroic forti-
" tude and such miracles! into this so-
" lemn temple, where the Supreme Be-
" ing, who protected you, has spoken to
" me by the voice of an angel! Oh, it
" is here, when I have protected you,
" that I would shut myself up and die!
" Here at every step I should see the in-
" delible marks of my fury and my
" crimes; but here also I should behold
" every where the traces of your divine
" virtue!" Here he stopped, and forci-
bly pressing my hands, his tears denied
him

him utterance: I felt such violent emotion, that I was incapable of speaking. "I ask nothing of you but your forgiveness," said he: "alas! what is life to "me? I do but exist for you. Heaven "grant that I may live long enough to "see you happy! But who knows whether I shall ever enjoy that glory, of "restoring you to happiness?"—At these words a gloomy melancholy overshaded his countenance . . . a dark presentiment, no doubt, agitated his mind; and I myself was much troubled. He then told me that, having neither horses nor carriage, he should be under the necessity of borrowing them of the Count, who was gone a hunting, and was not expected back till towards evening; besides, that it was necessary, on account

of

of the servants, that I should not go away till night; he added, however, that if I desired it he would take me away immediately: "But," continued he, "such "precipitation would certainly produce "a terrible noise, and would infallibly "ruin that cowardly and barbarous vil- "lain of whom I am the accomplice; for "I being obliged to give orders for our "departure, I should without doubt be "obliged to use violence, because, the "Count being once discovered, would "be both irritated and desperate; and, in "this tumult, what would become of "you and your infant?"—Here I interrupted Don Sancho, by telling him, that I did not wish, at least before I left the castle, that the Count and Leonora should be apprised of the existence of my child.

child. Don Sancho gave me his word that he would not say any thing of it. "All this may be done without any con- "fusion," continued he: "I will assure "the Count that you have yielded to my "passion, but that you will not agree "to our union taking place in this castle, "which has justly become so odious to "you; and that I will take you away "as soon as the domestics are all a-bed. "He may perhaps insist that the nup- "tial ceremony should immediately "take place, but I shall be able to si- "lence him. I shall have his carriage "and his horses, which I will put-to "myself. I will cause my two servants "to sit up, with orders to wait in the "Count's antichamber and to have an "eye upon him; I will place the car-

"riage

" riage about a hundred paces hence,
" and will come to fetch you about ten
" or eleven o'clock in the evening. I
" shall bring a great cloak with me, in
" which you may wrap yourself up, to-
" gether with your infant. I then will
" place you in the carriage, and we will
" immediately set off, leaving orders for
" my people to meet me at Grenada . . .
" you shall not quit the carriage, the
" blinds of which shall be kept shut; and
" we will thence proceed directly to
" Portugal."

I agreed that it was impossible hastily to form a better plan; but nevertheless I felt very uneasy: I feared the perfidy of the Count; I was afraid that he would easily see that Don Sancho, whom he knew

knew to possess a great deal of genero-sity, had renounced all idea of persecu-ting me, by his taking me away without marrying me; I at the same time knew that the security of the Count depended solely on my marriage with Don Sancho; I was also certain that he would employ the most treacherous means to stop or ruin us; and, above all, I feared that he would dispatch assassins after us on our journey. "Rest assured," said Don Sancho, "that his cowardice is "equal to his villany;" he will yield "without resistance to all my wishes, "and he has not the least time to form "any conspiracy. Not inhabiting this "castle constantly, his establishment here "is but small; he has but one valet de "chambre, four grooms, an old gar-

"dener,

" dener, Leonora, and two female ser-
" vants. I will tell him, that for his
" own security I will take no servants
" with me that know you, and that I
" shall apprise them that the Count has
" some dispatches to give them for Ma-
" drid, with which they must hold
" themselves in readiness to depart at
" day-break; and, to be more at hand,
" remain all night in his antichamber.
" But as for them, I shall apprise them
" that, instead of proceeding to Madrid,
" they must follow me on to Grenada.
" I will in the mean time go and prepare
" every thing for our flight. The Count
" will not return from the chase till two
" hours before supper; I will then speak
" to him about it, and shall only leave
" him under a pretext of going to bed
" immediately

"immediately after supper, in order to
"deceive the servants; I shall not stay
"in my chamber but a quarter of an
"hour, during which time my people,
"who are brave and affectionate, will
"narrowly watch the Count: should he
"leave the chamber but for one minute,
"or should he send any message, they
"will immediately inform me of it. In
"short, he will neither have time, cou-
"rage, nor presence of mind to prepare
"or do any thing to obstruct us. He
"will be ignorant of the route which we
"shall take; we shall leave him trem-
"bling and sunk in his own terrors.
"But," continued Don Sancho, "it is
"time that we should part. I have got
"the only key of the dungeon under my
"own care; there is no other: Leonora

 "takes

"takes it from, and delivers it to me. I
"must, for your own security, lock
"you up for the last time. As soon as I
"have spoken to the Count, I will write you
"a few lines before supper, to calm your
"anxiety: I shall charge Leonora with
"this note; she will immediately return
"to me the key, and I shall take good
"care that the Count shall not speak a
"single word to her in private. Be there-
"fore tranquil; return to your infant,
"and embrace her more tenderly than
"ever you have hitherto done. In a
"few hours you both shall be free,
"or Don Sancho will perish . . . I live
"but for you, and shall still further en-
"noble my existence by the unexampled
"proofs of attachment which I shall
"evince." On pronouncing these
words

words he arose. I followed him, entreating him again to write me a line, and to keep the Count entirely ignorant of the existence of my child. He told me that he never thought of mentioning it, supposing even that I had not prohibited him. Having arrived at the door of the cavern, I reached out my hand to him, and burst into tears; he grasped it with transports, and throwing himself on his knees, exclaimed, "Eternal Being, "thou whose majesty fills this cavern, "thou who watchest over Diana, and "who through her means hast opened "my eyes, and changed my heart, Oh, "make me worthy to defend and save "her!" At these words he precipitately rose, pressed my hand against his bosom, opened the door, and departed.

When I found myself alone, I did not feel that joy which naturally could have been expected; a thousand sinister ideas confusedly offered themselves to my imagination — but I hastened to return to my daughter, expecting to find her distressed by my long absence. As soon as she heard me approach, she called to me as usual, and I did not hear that tender voice which had saved me without the greatest emotion: she was bathed in tears. I embraced her a thousand times; and as I bore her in my arms, I felt a strong mixture of opposite sensations . . . the lively hope of a speedy deliverance made my heart palpitate; but this emotion of joy was repressed by a confused disquietude and the most terrific fears. I did not at all doubt the good faith of Don

Sancho:

Sancho: I knew his courage and his presence of mind; and I even flattered myself, that after a few hours reflection he certainly would be able to perfect a plan which he so rapidly conceived. But I mortally feared the perfidy and duplicity of the Count.— I passed the whole day in a most painful agitation, which went on gradually increasing as the time approached. — How many projects did I form with respect to my daughter!—But, even at the time that I indulged in these cheering hopes, I felt still an oppressive load weighing on my heart. In vain did I keep repeating to myself that my apprehensions were chimerical; my heart seemed to tell me to the contrary; and the sort of hope which I entertained served but to suspend as it were my re-

 signation,

signation, render my former habitual misfortune more irksome, and leave me a prey to all the torments of the most painful uncertainty. In such a state of anxiety I was but little tempted to shew the light to my daughter; and strange, gloomy presentiments hindered me all the time from doing it. I laid her down an hour earlier than usual, in order that I might go and listen near the wicket. Being in eager expectation of a note from Don Sancho, at seven o'clock I went and sat myself down on a stone near the door. After waiting until three quarters past nine I heard some noise on the staircase, and almost instantly saw a small basket coming down. I did not speak to Leonora, that I might not delay her, as she was to take the keys back to Don Sancho;

Sancho; but I took the basket, and flew to my oratory. With transports of joy I recognized the hand of Don Sancho; and read what follows:

"I HAVE spoke to him; he consents "to all, and offers no objections: he "has only exacted my word of honour "that I would not accuse him. I am "now writing to you from his closet: "he is not more than ten paces distant "from me, and is looking for some pa-"pers which he wishes to destroy... "all my orders are given, every precau-"tion is taken, for the security of our "flight. We have nothing more to dread: "you are free, and may enjoy that idea "with perfect confidence. We are now "going to set down to supper; in two

 "hours

" hours time I shall be at the door of the
" cavern . . . this night shall expiate all
" my crimes . . . I wish to live, and I
" resign you!—My heart is firm in its
" resolves, and will ever remain so;
" and yet how deeply is it wounded! . .
" I have no hopes, no futurity to look
" to. Remorse, desires, anger, hitherto
" filled up my existence, and kept my
" mind employed; but this sudden calm
" which succeeds after so many storms,
" is to me but like the night of my
" grave—like destruction; my ardent
" soul no more will taste the com-
" forts of rest; and when I wish to pic-
" ture to myself the charms of tranquil-
" lity, nothing but the grave offers itself
" to my view. O Diana! many are the
" chances which might snatch you from

. . . " the

"the abyss wherein you lay; but what
"power can save me from the vortex
"wherein love's frightful violence has
"plunged me?—Farewell! ... at twelve
"the unfortunate Don Sancho will re-
"store to you that happiness which he
"has irretrievably lost himself!"

The first lines of this note alone attracted my attention: I read them over again several times, and at length said to myself, the term of all my troubles is at hand. But it was not with the effusions of real joy that I returned the Almighty my thanks: this note increased my emotion and my anxiety, more than it strengthened my hopes. I looked on every surrounding object with a sort of terror; dreading every moment lest some unfore-

seen circumstance should render our design abortive; and no longer could conceive how I had been able to live during four years in this horrid cavern.

When we submit to necessity, we may make a good use of our imagination, which at other times so often misleads us. For has not reason its illusions also? Reason can bestow agreeable colours on the most gloomy objects, and, together with the help of religion, had adorned my cavern; and I therefore feared, in case my expectations should be deceived, that I should not be able to recover that fortitude and resolution which I had hitherto possessed. Meanwhile I prepared every thing for my departure. I thought I ought to employ infinite precautions

that my daughter might not be too much exposed to the air and light; I placed a bandage on her eyes; she heaved a little groan, but she did not awake; and I prepared a blanket that I meant to wrap her up with. I left her asleep; it was then eleven o'clock; and taking my lantern, I went to walk about the cavern until twelve, as I found it impossible to remain for a moment in the same place. I was holding Don Sancho's note, and these words, *we have nothing more to dread; you are free, and may enjoy that idea with perfect confidence*, made a deep and lively impression on me at this moment. I had but three quarters of an hour to wait. So near the accomplishment of such a promise, it seemed to me impossible that the enterprise should

fai'. Hope gradually became certainty—I ought then to have given up all my thoughts to God, but I was only one and twenty . . . and I prayed and returned thanks with an insurmountable inattention: joy dispelled that fervor which misfortune had formerly given to my devotion; in short, I was not deserving of being made happy . . . I was only engaged with thinking on the delight which I should derive from the contemplation of my Alphonsine's face—the view of her eyes, which I had never yet seen—the expression of her looks, which I pictured to myself so tender and affectionate—and the witnessing of her joy and surprise. Together with these so natural reflections, a thousand rather frivolous ideas would intrude: I no longer remained insensible

sensible to the idea of re-appearing on the earth in all the lustre of youth . . . . yes, I will own it! More than once, at the idea of again beholding my features in a glass, and adorning my person, I felt my emotion increase!—These reveries disturbed me with their delusive charms, and I became angry with myself. Alas! I was soon destined to expiate them . . . at a quarter before twelve I went and sat down on the stone by the side of the wicket, and from this moment could no longer connect my ideas; I listened, with a palpitation which suspended as it were all my faculties. After waiting during half an hour, I began to feel uneasy: the profound silence, and deep gloom of the cavern began to appal me, and my terror went on increasing every

every minute.—At length, about one o'clock, my dog began to be agitated, and scratched against the door; I rose in a transport—I listened; some person was coming down the steps. I recovered hope and joy. "Is it you, Don Sancho?" exclaimed I . . . Heavens! what terror seized me, when I heard the Count's thundering voice pronouncing these dreadful words: *Don Sancho is dead. I shall employ the night in walling up this door, and nothing henceforth!* . . . I heard no more: struck, as with a thunderbolt, I fell senseless on the stone. In about half an hour I began to recover: my dog had set up a mournful howling; the poor animal seemed as if desirous of giving me assistance. He was in my lap,

pulling

pulling me by my gown, and one of his paws had stuck in my hair.

Notwithstanding Azor's yelling, I plainly distinguished the noise of the work, which was carrying on the other side of the door. It was no longer love, who in anger was feigning to wall up the door; it was hatred busy in covering up my grave.

My first idea was that of running away from my implacable foe: I took up my lantern, which was on the point of going out; I arose, and walked towards my chamber: Azor did not follow me, he remained close to the door, and I heard his howlings for a length of time; and when they ceased, it seemed to me as if

I was more alone than ever. I pictured to myself the wretched Don Sancho, pierced with blows, and lying a bleeding corpse . . . and the excess of my terror caused me such a trembling fit, that I was forced to stop and lean against the rock, during which time my lantern fell from my hand and the light went out. This last incident made me quite frantic. —I wished I had been behind the door which I had just left, when I should at least have heard the noise of living creatures; the silence and obscurity of the cavern causing me as much terror as if I had never been alone before. Alas! my imagination but a few months before had overleaped the bounds, and transported me on the earth, and now for the second time I was going to be confined!

As

As I had walked but very slowly, I had reached only about half-way to my chamber, and felt myself extremely weak, and my head so confused, that I began to despair being able to return to my daughter during this disastrous night. I tried to walk on, however; but I staggered and bruised myself repeatedly against sharp points of the rocks. Every time I felt the cold stone, I shuddered—my hair stood an end: I could not support myself, and yet was mortally afraid to stop. Whenever I stopped, the most frightful images crowded on my mind; I could not connect my ideas, and the most ghastly forms seemed stalking before me. Once, when I stopped, endeavouring to recover my breath and form some recollection of the windings I had to follow

(for

(for whenever I reached an angle I was at a loss which way to turn), I remembered at length that my chamber was on the right, and that at a distance of twenty paces Don Sancho this same day had fallen on his knees at hearing the sound of my daughter's voice! I shuddered at the thought I was going to pass the same ground where this unhappy man had paced but so lately. I was advancing with much caution, when my foot met with something which seemed to move at the time. . . . I startled . . . I knew the ground was perfectly smooth . . . I mechanically looked downwards, and fancied I saw Don Sancho's bleeding corpse lying extended at my feet, and obstructing my passage.—At that instant I felt myself laid hold of and dragged forward

by

by my garment; my knees trembled and sunk under me; I fell down, but I found at the same time it was my dog that had caused me this extreme fright. I rose, took up Azor in my arms; and my terrors having a little subsided, I soon after reached my chamber. I embraced my Alphonsine, and shed torrents of tears: I laid down, and remained on my bed for three hours, but could not get any sleep; I rose again, and curiosity led me to the wicket. They were still at work walling up the door, which was not finished until half past six o'clock. As I was returning to my chamber, I perceived, with the help of a candle which I held in my hand, something lying on the ground, which on examination I found to be a pocket-book. I concluded

it must have dropped from Don Sancho's pocket at the time he threw himself on his knees. I had not courage to pick it up, and left it where I had found it: but when my daughter was up, I returned with her, without any light, to that part of the cavern. I found the pocket-book again, took it up with a trembling hand, carried it into my chamber, and put it into a closet; unwilling to examine its contents at that time, although I had no doubt but I should find some information concerning my deplorable fate.—I should have deplored the loss of Don Sancho, even before he had made a sacrifice of his love, and promised to restore to me my liberty: he was the only person in the whole world from whom I could expect compassion and assistance, and who

felt

felt disposed, spite of his threats and violence, to appreciate my fortitude and my resignation. While he complained of me, he seemed still to admire my conduct. I could not but be attached to him, notwithstanding the rigours I exercised towards him; and for four years I had received no praises but those which he lavished on me.—The most bitter persecutions had not entirely subdued my vanity . . . and Don Sancho now offering himself a willing victim in order to become my deliverer and the protector of my child, became in my eyes the most generous of men, and the most deserving of my regard. Thus I deplored his loss sincerely. I could not conceive how the Count had been able to perpetrate the horrid act, though I concluded he

must

must have done it by artifice, and at the time when Don Sancho had retired into his chamber; and I imagined that the precaution which the latter had taken to remove his own servants, and station them near the Count's apartment, must have operated against him by depriving him of all assistance, and giving him up defenceless to the perfidious vengeance of his enemy. But then how could the murder be concealed? what had they done with the unhappy man's body? This I had not the power to guess: I knew the crime, but I knew not the atrocity of the means. Alas! by a strict judgment of Providence, he who, to accomplish my ruin, was doomed to fall under the blows of the villain whose accomplice he was, became his real victim

victim when he wished to serve and deliver me! To fill up the measure of my grief, I was discontented with myself.—With confusion I remember the emotions of vanity which I experienced in the moments I cherished the hope of a speedy deliverance. I did not conceive that even maternal affection alone was in some measure connected with this foible. My greatest misfortune was, that I now could no longer hope for that divine protection which had hitherto contributed so much to my quietude. I now found that misfortunes had not yet perfectly matured either my mind or disposition.—Reflection now convinced me that if Don Sancho had even succeeded in breaking my chains, I should have found neither repose or security under the only care

and

and protection of a man accustomed for such a length of time to yield blindly to every impulse, and wantonly to submit to the impetuosity of his passions. It is true he had in our last interview pledged his faith to me, and renounced for ever his love; but perhaps, a few hours after, this placid disposition would have vanished; I reflected more particularly that his last note breathed nothing but an ardent passion. What had I not to apprehend, in placing myself in the hands of a man whose resolutions were ever fluctuating, whose disposition was so weak, and whose passions were so vehement! However, I now was delivered up, together with my infant, to the vengeance of a monster whose ferocious cruelty nothing could constrain. After having assassinated

sassinated Don Sancho, what would now withhold him from ridding himself of an unfortunate captive whom he abhorred? Under such extremity I enjoyed the thought that my cavern was walled up, at least I did not labour under the apprehension of being assassinated during my sleep. . . . But, perhaps they might withhold my provisions? My only hopes now rested in Leonora: I recollected her promises, and relied on them, flattering myself that Heaven would pardon my weakness on account of the innocence of my infant. I returned in the evening to the wicket, and heard them still busily employed in closing up the door, which lasted till near four o'clock in the morning. On the third day after the death of the unfortunate Don Sancho, I had

some conversation, with Leonora at the wicket: she informed me that I should no longer be supplied with candles, which I had already anticipated; adding, however, that my provisions would not be retrenched: she assured me that the Count departed that morning for Madrid, and that he would visit the castle but very seldom. This information was a great consolation to me. I still possessed a very valuable diamond ring which I promised to give to Leonora, but told her I had no light to look for it, at the same time entreating her to supply me with light sufficient to last but for a few days, which she promised to do without the least hesitation, apprizing me however that it would be for the last time. I questioned her about Don Sancho, which she briefly

answered by saying that he had died suddenly, but she would not enter into any details: she however expressed more mildness and humanity in this last conversation than she had ever done before. A few days after I gave her the diamond ring, and she promised, in rather an affecting tone, that she would always do every thing in her power to soften the rigours of my fate. I trembled, however, to think that I had no more presents to give her, and that she was perfectly well acquainted with this circumstance, as I had the imprudence, on my first entering the cavern, to make her acquainted with the quantity of jewels I had then about me. But if interest prevailed on her in the first instance, religious scruples now must have completed what avarice before

had begun; for ever since she had ceased to expect any pecuniary consideration, she rendered me the most invaluable services, and not without some risk to herself. Leonora, far from being impious, always possessed some religious notions; those however being but imperfect, they impressed her with fear, though not with love; and I owe to this salutary fear my own existence, as well as that of my infant. I passed a fortnight in a state of such indifference, which caused such an indolent habit that, excepting the time which I devoted to walk with my daughter, I remained immoveably fixed either in my arm-chair, or lying on my bed. My thoughts now were vague and gloomy: during the life of Don Sancho I had always lived in expectation of seeing some

kind

kind of revolution in my situation; even my fears awakened all my attention; his love, his remorse, his spite, his letter, afforded some kind of variety in my solitude: but now I saw nothing in the future but a continual monotony of grief and sorrow, without any adventures or hope; I forgot the perfidy and the fury of Don Sancho; I only recollected his constancy, his passionate attachment, his generous resolution, and his tragic end! ... I could not interrogate my heart now without discovering new weaknesses and inconceivable strange fancies.— But how useful was this examination to me! I humiliated myself before the Being who prefers a true sentiment of humility to all laudable actions, which are accompanied either by pride or pre-

 sumption.

sumption. I by degrees recovered that calm happiness, produced by religious confidence; and I conceived that my resignation would be more agreeable to Heaven, than it was during the life of Don Sancho, as it would no longer be subject to praise or admiration. My daughter was an inducement to regain my fortitude, for I perceived that she was affected at my sorrows and my troubles; and from that moment I affected the greatest hilarity: I invented new play-things for her; and when she grasped me with her little hands, she no more found the tears trickling down my cheeks. I now commenced to teach her to recite her prayers by heart, and to inculcate into her tender mind the first principles of religion. With what fervour, and with what faith, did

did I accompany her in prayer! her voice seemed so mild and so moving! Oh, how much does maternal affection exalt piety! Is it possible that a tender mother should not possess the most profound sentiments of religion? How is it possible that she can reject such exalted hopes, and such support for her infant? How can she, without this grand idea, sustain the mortal fears, the natural consequences of the weakness and frailty of infancy? How can maternal ambition condescend to be content with human succours, when she may look to Heaven for assistance? Ah! the heart of a mother, without efforts, raises itself to the Deity! In imploring Heaven for her infant, she forgets that worship is a duty; prayer seems to her to be but a natural

impulse, springing from her tenderness.

However, willing to cultivate the good will of my gaoler, I wished to establish between her and myself a kind of regular intercourse, which she peremptorily refused; particularly ever since she began to pity me, and without doubt to feel some sort of repentance: my conversation must have caused her some kind of uneasiness; she always carefully avoided it, and always answered me in a very brief manner. I spoke to her about the order which condemned me never to have any more light; an order which had become more terrible, as it left me nothing to hope for, in consequence of the death of the unfortunate Don Sancho.

But

But Leonora seemed inflexible on this point: the Count had told her, that smoke had been perceived issuing from the cavities of the rock; he pretended, that as I was alone, I might by some imprudence set the straw matting or furniture on fire; and all that I could obtain from Leonora, was a little tinder and a few bunches of matches, with a promise to supply me every year on Easter day with a pound of candles. She rated her condescension particularly high on this account, and I felt the value of it. I had saved nearly five and twenty pounds of tapers, and calculated that, by using them only for working such little time as was immediately necessary for my daughter, namely, for two or three hours in a week, the stock would last me nearly three years.

 I therefore

I therefore banished from my thoughts every alarm as to a later period, leaving the rest in the hands of Providence. Leonora agreed with me that, in case she had any communication to make, she would always come to the wicket either in the evening at ten o'clock, or the morning at five; for which reason, ever after this, I never failed every day to go to the wicket, morning and evening, at the appointed time. Moreover, I contrived means whereby she might be enabled to call me at any hour. Leonora no longer had the speaking trumpet, the Count having taken it with him to Madrid; besides, it was too large for Leonora to lift it up to the wicket: but she procured for me a large bell, a hook, a hammer, and some cords. I fixed the cords

cords along the walls, from the wicket all the way to the cave of the fountain; I suspended the bell there, placing the end of the cord through the wicket, so that, on Leonora's pulling it, I might be apprized by the noise of the bell (which I could perfectly hear from my chamber) that she had something to communicate, entreating her at the same time not to use those means but only on particular occasions. Leonora, one morning, having given me the signal, by knocking three times, told me that she had an attack of a fever, so that I might not expect her for some days. I had provisions in abundance, and she had brought me still more; but I nevertheless was dreadfully alarmed at the idea that her illness might perhaps last for a long time, or that it

might prove fatal to her: this thought distracted me, and as I remained silent, and Leonora had left off speaking, I thought that she was gone; and as I was returning to my chamber, I heard her calling me; when I immediately returned, and asked her what she wanted? She hesitated for some time; at length she said, "Is it true that you forgive me?"—"O yes, my dear Leonora," exclaimed I; "and it is a long time since I have not "harboured the least resentment against "you."—"Well," said she, "promise me "to offer up your prayers for me."—"I "give you my word."—"I thank you."—At these words she hastily quitted me. On this occasion also I observed how much our vanity, so ambitious in its pretensions during prosperity, is gratified by

trifles

trifles in adversity. What was Leonora's good opinion to me? Nevertheless, I was not only affected, but flattered, that my piety had inspired her with so much confidence. I was sorry that I had not availed myself at this time of the religious disposition which she evinced, to try once again to bring her over to my interest, and to persuade her to restore me my freedom; and during the three weeks which her illness lasted my alarms exceeded all those which I had hitherto experienced. I at first flattered myself that her illness would not be attended with any fatal consequences, and that she would only keep her room for three or four days, as she had frequently done before; but not hearing any thing of her at the expiration of a fortnight, I did not

not doubt but she had died. I examined our provisions, and I calculated that they were sufficient to last us for three months and more, if I made some retrenchment in the consumption of them. From that moment I restricted myself to the most rigorous regimen, and I never gave my daughter her victuals during the whole time, without bathing her with my tears, thinking that perhaps in a few months she would ask me for them in vain. When at the time of her meals she said to me, "Mamma, I am hungry," these words pierced me to the soul: I represented to myself that terrible moment when, bereft of every thing, and having nothing left to give her, I should hear those distressing words, *I am hungry!* pronounced in a supplicative and lamentable

able tone. The least diminution in our stock seemed to me to be excessive; I considered it as a portion of the existence of my child. What ardent vows did I put up to Heaven for the re-establishment of the health of that woman who had given me so much cause to hate her? How precious had her life now become to me! It is impossible to describe or imagine what I suffered during the third week: this forced abstemiousness, which I had undergone for more than twelve days, so reduced and weakened me, that it deprived me of sleep. While my daughter was up, I forced myself to rise and play with her as usual; but as soon as she was asleep, I put up my prayers to Heaven, and gave free vent to my tears. Often in the middle of the night, forcibly struck with the

the idea that Heaven would grant every thing asked for in humility and fervent prayer, I arose, and prostrated myself on the ground, and bathing it with my tears, collected all the strength and energy I was mistress of, to entreat Heaven to preserve my infant. These enthusiastic emotions had always the happy effect to calm me and reanimate my hopes: I then laid myself down tranquilly, and my humble and strong faith shed a divine balm on the deep wounds which pierced my heart, and I enjoyed a few hours repose. But when the next day I returned to the wicket, the frightful aspect of the empty basket replunged me into the greatest horror. I now was astonished at having thought myself unhappy at the time when I was regularly fur-

nished

nished with provisions; and thus did the goodness of Heaven, by these disquietudes and mortal fears, prepare me to support with more fortitude my lonely situation for the future.

At length the happy day arrived, when I found my basket replenished with provisions; that memorable day which enabled me again to bring my daughter some new bread, fresh milk, and excellent fruit! For fifteen days deprived of bread, we had nothing in its stead but hard sea-biscuit and dried gingerbread; I threw myself on my knees, at the sight of this basket, which restored and promised us new life. With what transport did I embrace my daughter! with what joy did I prepare our dinner! and how much

much did I repent at not having more implicitly relied on the goodness of Providence! Never did I, in my better days, take so delicious a repast; never did the most choice viands produce so agreeable a sensation, as that which I experienced on eating the new baked bread; I even felt an inexpressible pleasure in smelling and feeling it.

On the second day I did not fail to await Leonora at the wicket. I had a strong desire of conversing with her; and as soon as I heard her approach the wicket, I felt all the emotion and all the joy which the most lively friendship could have produced. Leonora told me that she had been extremely ill, and that if she had found herself in any imminent danger

danger she would have sent for the village curate, and have confessed to him my concealment, under the seal of confession, with permission to reveal it after her death; adding these remarkable words: "I have had, during my sickness, so "much inquietude on your account, "that I yesterday made a trifling will, "in which I have declared your situa-"tion: I have sealed up this writing, "and have carefully concealed it; and I "shall take care of it until I find an op-"portunity to deposit it secretly with a "notary, so that my Lord shall not know "of it."

This discourse gave me the greatest consolation which I had ever received during my captivity: I overwhelmed Le-

onora

onora with my blessings; and I spoke from the bottom of my soul, for I felt myself labouring under such an oppression, that this but half-justice, as it were, inspired me with the same transports of gratitude as the best-founded obligations could have done. Leonora was this day less impatient to leave me than she usually was: I ásked her a great many questions, which she all answered; and it was in this conversation that she apprized me that the Count had married the Duchess d' Olmas. I sincerely pitied that respectable woman; I had tenderly loved her, and I was very certain that a union so ill suited to her disposition would render her life unhappy. I once again in this conversation endeavoured to gain Leonora over to my interest; I conjured

jured her, in the name of Religion, to restore me my freedom: to which she answered, "that it would take her at "least six days to demolish the wall of "my prison; that the Count might ar-"rive unexpectedly and surprise her in "this undertaking; and that nothing in "the world should induce her to accuse "the Count." She added, "that she "had done enough for me, and that I "ought to be contented." After which answer she abruptly quitted me.

Reassured of the existence of my child, after having been distracted by the most afflicting thoughts, I felt my soul more calm than ever I had done since my captivity. The sudden termination of an extreme suffering produces a kind of joyous

joyous state, which, although it does not strike the imagination, is nevertheless most happy and most real. Passing rapidly from a state of happy mediocrity to an immense fortune, has nothing in it to compare to that ravishing sensation which we experience by being suddenly delivered from some horrible evil; and thus it is, that the unfortunate often enjoy the most perfect delight.

Five months had elapsed since the death of Don Sancho: my daughter had attained the age of four years and a half; she evinced all the sensibility and understanding that maternal tenderness could wish for. It was a consolation to me to remark, that she was indebted to the privation of light, and to our situation for

a memory,

a memory, and application extraordinary at her age. Never being disturbed by any external objects, by noise or by company, she was wholly enveloped, as it were, in the subject with which she was occupied; the things that she had to recollect were so few, that they did not in the least weaken her attention. In the profound silence of the cavern, and the sort of monotonous life weled, my lessons, which I endeavoured to render agreeable by raising her curiosity, seemed to be nothing but an amusement. Her application seemed to be without any effort on her part; and every thing was deeply engraved on her young properly organized mind, because it was imbibed there without any confusion. Without doubt her ignorance was extreme; the

universe

universe was veiled to her ; every material object was concealed from her sight ; she had no ideas either of pleasure or society. But ought I not to thank Heaven, who by so miraculous an adventure had, from the nature of the thing, prepared for and assured to her an education, moral, pure, and perfect? As a child favoured by Providence, she had not the least idea of vice or vanity. At the age of four years and a half she spoke and equally understood the French and Spanish languages ; she already recited with a grace in these languages a number of small pieces, in verse and prose. I began to teach her arithmetic, with counters ; I gave this study the form of a game, and this became a very favourite amusement of hers. Her sense of feeling being increased

creased by the privation of sight, she immediately knew every thing by the touch, a faculty in which I much exercised her, and in which she attained so much perfection as to surpass all my expectations. We took every day regularly long walks; I exercised her even in jumping, by holding her by the hand. By these cares and many others, the idea of which I learnt from medicinal books, I had the happiness to see her grow up in perfect health, and acquire a strong constitution. One evening, when according to custom I drew my hand over her little face, to endeavour to form an idea of her features, she asked me what service the eyes were of; and immediately recollecting herself, "Ah," said she, "I know "—they are made for weeping." Alas!

she never knew any other use of them. This affecting ignorance, and expressed with so much simplicity, caused my tears to flow. I hastened to put her to bed, in order to conceal from her the insurmountable grief which overclouded my soul. At ten o'clock I laid myself down. I was in my first sleep when I was awoke by the sound of the bell, which I heard for the first time, and which apprized me of some extraordinary event. It was midnight; I rose extremely agitated, and ran to the wicket, where I found Leonora. "My Lord is arrived," said she, "but will soon again return to Madrid. "He proposes to bring your provisions "to-morrow morning himself." Here her voice faultered. "Well!" said I. —"Well," said Leonora, "do not eat

" any of those provisions which you find
" in the basket ; I have brought you
" bread and milk for to-morrow."—" Just
" Heaven!"—" Pray to God for me ; I
" hope that he will pardon me my sins
" for the sake of what I do for you."
—" O my dear Leonora, pray to God
" for me! O Leonora! Leonora! do
" not abandon me."—" No, no, poor
" unfortunate lady, I will not permit
" such a horrible deed." Had I been
near Leonora when she gave me these
assurances, I should have thrown myself
at her feet. How sweet it was to me
the first time to hear from her mouth
such expressions of pity! " My only
protectress," exclaimed I, " my only
" friend, do not abandon me."—" I an-
" swer for your life."—" God bless you!

 " and

" and here on my knees I pray for you
" and thank you. If my Lord should
" speak to you, seem ignorant of this."—
" Oh, I will not go to the wicket."—
" Empty every thing out of the basket,
" and do not fail to throw all away."
—" Oh, my kind benefactress!"—" He
" will come again some other time. He
" may perhaps make some other at-
" tempts, but he will leave this place in a
" few days."—" Till then I will live upon
" the stock which I have by me."—" I
" will give you a signal to distinguish
" my basket from his. As long as he
" remains here, I will put a roasted
" chicken or a pigeon in my basket, with
" a ribbon about its neck, and besides
" a bundle of matches; if you do not
" find both these things, throw all away."

—" Heavenly

—" Heavenly Father! My good Leo-
" nora, how much I am indebted to
" you! Ah, you have atoned for every
" thing. What would become of me
" without you?" — " You would have
" been poisoned to-morrow." —Adieu;
" pray to God for me!" At these
words she retired, and left me seized
with terror.

The state that I was in did not permit
me to think about lying down. I had
not had a minute's rest: I stopped in that
part of the cavern with a light that I put
into my lantern. At five o'clock in the
morning I tremblingly beheld the fatal
basket descend . . . I took up with horror
the provisions, which, created to sustain
life, but contaminated by crime, would

 now

now only inflict death, and I resolved to throw them into the pit of the cavern, to which I immediately proceeded, my dog following me. Having arrived near the pit, I threw away the bread; but I trembled so much, that I dropped the jug of milk. It fell at the side of the pit, and all the milk was spilt on the ground. My dog, whom I had not seen, licked it up with avidity behind me, out of a piece of the broken jug which lay before him; I turned round, and was petrified on seeing him drink. I immediately ran up to him, took him up in my arms, and returned to my chamber. I extinguished my candle before I entered it, as my daughter had just awoke and called me. I took her up; and whilst dressing her, I heard my poor Azor howling in a low and

deep

deep tone. On a sudden he was convulsed, and uttered two or three loud yelps; he then came near us. Alphonsine, who was sitting by the side of me, stroaked him, took him up and laid him on my lap, but he was dead!—How can I describe what I felt at this moment, in thinking that had it not been for Leonora I should have given the milk to my daughter! Ah, that courageous woman who saved us has expiated all the injuries which she had done me! I shall never embrace my daughter without blessing her. Alphonsine however seemed astonished at Azor's want of motion, and soon seemed somewhat frightened; she questioned me to this effect, and I answered in a faultering voice, when she immediately burst out into tears. I en-

deavoured to give her some slight idea of death; she listened to me attentively, and then she burst out again into a flood of bitter tears. I carried my poor Azor into the small cavern, and threw him into the pit. This day was one of the most distressing I ever past. During the whole time that we were eating, I felt an oppressive load upon my heart; my thoughts were so gloomy that I could not resolve to give my daughter the milk which Leonora had brought me, thinking it was not impossible that, unknown to her, that had also been infused with the poison. I laid myself down earlier than usual, as I was greatly in want of rest; but, notwithstanding my fatigue, I did not close my eyes the whole of the night. I reflected with terror on the

villain

villain whom I had so passionately loved, and whose mind was solely engaged in seeking my life: I remembered, with a kind of remorse, the love which I once bore him; it seemed to me that the instinct of a pure soul ought to have been sufficient to prevent a sympathy with one so black as his; and I trembled on seeing to what excess the perverseness of passion and atheism could lead a man to whom nature had refused a compassionate and sensible heart. Leonora's heart was not more tender than his; but she had preserved some ideas of religion, and that made murder appear horrible to her. Had her mind been more enlightened, and had she possessed the principles of true piety, she never would have become the accomplice of her master, who,

 deprived

deprived of her assistance, never could have accomplished the inhuman project to destroy me. I easily then concluded that the ill-fated Don Sancho had perished by poison, and understood that it had been found more convenient to get rid of me by those means than by others more violent, particularly Leonora having refused her assistance; and the walling up of the cave was perfectly comformable to all these schemes, it rendering it impossible for Leonora to afford a wretched victim any assistance, or receive her last sighs.

When I reflected on the frightful depths of these execrable machinations, nothing could have soothed my just alarms, had it not been for the firm persuasion

suasion which I entertained that Heaven, moved at my contrition and repentance, would not abandon me a prey to the rage of a monster bereft of every sentiment of religion and humanity.

During the following days I had a severe fit of a fever. Leonora restored to me a little tranquillity by informing me that she had declared to my persecutor that she neither would quit the castle nor give up her trust, and only on these two conditions would she engage never to accuse him; but, that if he drove her away, or deprived her of the key of my prison or that of the wicket, she would discover every thing. This resolution, which was of so much service to me, made me tremble for her sake; but she

 answered

answered that she took; and should always take certain precautions, which could not fail to preserve her from the effects of the poison. After this I did not any longer entertain apprehensions for our safety, knowing the Count to be as cowardly as he was cruel. Besides, loaded with so many crimes already, he could not well employ violence against a person who was informed of all misdeeds, and could easily discover them.

A few days after this I had another conversation with Leonora, when she apprized me that the Count had set off for Madrid, and that she did not think he would ever return. I felt myself revived at this intelligence; and Leonora seemed flattered at the satisfaction I experienced

perienced on finding myself entirely under her sole care. Indeed, ever since the time that she had preserved my existence, I observed infinitely less hard-heartedness about her; and she even on several occasions testified a sort of concern in my favour, which often led me to hope I might in time recover my liberty, though she always peremptorily refused to hear me on the subject. Had I seen her but somewhat inclined to yield to my intreaties, I should not have hesitated, as a further inducement, to confide to her my secret; but I saw, on the contrary, that now that her conscience was relieved by the invaluable service which she had rendered me, she was less inclined than ever to commit her own security. She had supreme authority in the

the castle; she enjoyed a comfortable independence, which her pension and the great savings she was able to make in the general expences of so opulent a master (who, notwithstanding his avarice, was extremely remiss in his own concerns), enabled her greatly to improve. Leonora's pension, besides, was not yet secure to her. The Count had given her reason to hope that in time he would settle an annuity on her for life, to which Leonora could not fail to forfeit every expectation as well as her present comforts, if she accused the Count: besides, she must have acknowledged she had during several years been his accomplice, and she was convinced she should be first apprehended, in order to the matter being fully investigated, and that, after languishing

guishing a long time in prison, abandoned by me, and persecuted by my family, she would at length die of want. If she had delivered me from confinement, and remaining with me as my deliveress, had conducted me to some foreign country, she would not have risked so much. But this last scheme would have required great advances of money, without any security as to rewards, or even reimbursements; and such a project therefore could not fail to stagger such a disposition as Leonora's was. These various reflections totally deprived me of the glimpse of hope which I had hitherto cherished; but I succeeded to obtain several things from Leonora which she had denied me. She gave me a little dog which I was extremely desirous of

having for Alphonsine, for nothing had consoled her for the loss of Azor; and she received this new companion with infinite pleasure. About the close of that year I was attacked with a rheumatic complaint in my back, which gave the most excruciating tortures.—I attributed a complaint of this nature, so uncommon to the age of three and twenty, to the many hours I had passed at the fountain, particularly during the night; and in order to preserve my daughter from so painful a disorder, I began to accustom her in cold weather to wear nothing but flannel next her skin, which Leonora supplied me with, and which I made up for her. With these precautions, together with constant exercise and an excellent regimen, I succeeded to preserve the health

health of my child. On those days when our provisions were brought, I used, after Leonora was gone, to take her with me to the wicket, being persuaded that a little fresh air might be obtained there, which came through the first door and the wicket into the cavern. By degrees, as Alphonsine advanced in years, her questions became more frequent. I had ever since her earliest infancy accustomed her to the useful habit of never urging any subject further than I wished, and of being satisfied with the following answer, namely, that the explanation she requested was above her years and comprehension. She never insisted, and generally forgot the subject. In her enquiries respecting our food, I answered, that God gave it to us, and

that

that I found it every day in a certain part of the cavern, where a child could not go without some danger. She had also imbibed a habit of the most perfect obedience, which I found no difficulty to inculcate, as she depended on me alone, and at every moment of the day. She not only loves, but she knows no person besides myself; her gratitude, her respect, her tenderness, were never divided. She admires my superiority the more, as she has nothing she can compare with it; and having not a single idea but what she is indebted to me for, she naturally, and without discussion, adopts all my opinions. She looks on me alone as the depository of religious precepts, revelation, science, morality, and human industry. I am the sole and sovereign ar-

bitress

bitress of the world which she inhabits. Every sentiment of gratitude, attachment, confidence, admiration, and submission, which in the world are experienced towards various objects, are all concentrated in me, in her own mind, and carried to the highest transports. Filial piety is to her a sort of worship; she has no more temptation to resist my will, than we should have to stand against what we know to be impossibilities; she follows me incessantly, and unites herself with me in thought and sentiment, as with an indispensable guide: satisfied with her existence, which my cares and love have embellished, she reveres and cherishes me equally with that Providence which interferes for her preservation. . . . I have described her affection; but how shall I describe

describe mine!—In an ordinary situation I should have preferred her to every thing; what then must I experience? . . . Ah! if I thought of myself alone, I should not deplore our destiny; the thought that no mother was ever loved as I am, were sufficient to induce me to hail it as a blessing.—But what am I? What signifies my own destiny? Alphonsine's fate alone interests me; for her sake would I cherish hope and bear calamity with patience. How happy should we both have been, had I had the power of giving her a light during a few hours every day, with the certainty of never being bereft of it again! What idea do I form to myself of the pleasure of looking at her, fixing my eyes on her own, studying the expression of her physiognomy, and reading

reading on her charming little face what is passing in her heart at the time! . . . I do not know whether I should have had the fortitude of denying myself the pleasure of restoring her sight, if I had had the means of supplying ourselves with light for two or three years; but I never had more at a time than could last for two or three months, at the rate of eight or nine hours a day; besides which, it was absolutely necessary to reserve a part against unforeseen exigencies. My prudence in this respect was always forced; but I must have been very inconsiderate, had I yielded to the temptation.

Eighteen months had elapsed since Don Sancho's death. I have mentioned before, that I had taken care of a pocket-

book

book which he lost in the cavern on the day of his death. I never had summoned sufficient courage to open it; but one evening, having made up my mind that I would examine its contents, I first found a small sealed packet, entitled *My Will*: I did not open it. The pocket-book contained about thirty pages sewed up together, written close, and the result of Don Sancho's unconnected thoughts. I looked at the last pages, which were dated on the day of his death, and contained the following words:

" She has unaccountably overturned " all my ideas! What was I before I " knew her? I knew not that virtue's " reward could be found on the earth! " . . . Wretch that I was! was I to find

" this

"this out, when stained with the blackest
"crimes! *No free arbiter here, man is*
"*but a mere machine.* I have said this; I
"have repeated it to myself, endeavoured
"to persuade myself that it was so; but
"the moment she appeared, my heart
"denied that language.

"If I hold the faculty of admiring
"and rejecting, I ought likewise to be
"able to choose; but I am dragged along
"a horrible road which I hate. Is it
"true then that, in order to stem the tor-
"rent of human passions, we have need
"of imploring supreme assistance? Is
"it true that our will can be constant
"and efficacious, only with the help of
"an all-powerful support?

"Oh!

" Oh! how I abhor the past! . . . my
" recollections oppress me! . . . A great
" and splendid reputation might have
" seduced her. So young, so timid, so
" delicate a woman, to shew such forti-
" tude, such patience, such heroic cou-
" rage! . . . while I, all along, am tor-
" mented, distracted by so many uncer-
" tain projects and schemes, so many
" strange and unaccountable sentiments!
" Fool that I was! what a design was
" mine! Had I had the possibility, ought
" I to have wished to pervert her princi-
" ples — to deprive her of her noble
" constancy? Ought I to wish that
" Diana should become a woman like all
" others? No, no; this were indeed re-
" lapsing into my former misery!

" She

" She might have loved me! and not-
" withstanding my errors, my crimes, and
" her sufferings, the excess of my love
" has triumphed over her resentments!
" — nay, perhaps over her heart! . . .
" Oh, that, deceived by her angelic
" sweetness, I could indeed believe that
" she loves me in secret, not with a hope
" of obtaining a confession of it from
" her, but that I might admire her still
" more, and wonder at her sublime re-
" solution!

" Yes, dread alone of violating her
" chastity can wring her consent from her,
" and drag her to the altar!—She will
" hate me! . . . but she will be my wife,
" and then I will tell her: I might have
" stabbed thee, together with myself,

" but that I should have profaned the
" object of so much adoration.—Ah!
" do not believe it! and this scrawl would
" bear me testimony.

" What a night have I passed! . . .
" What horrid images have haunted me
" during the rapid hours of a painful
" sleep! . . . When I lie down, what
" horrible dreams! and when I wake,
" what frantic transports!

" I am going to see her again, and
" that to frighten her! What invisible,
" what cruel hand has dragged me on
" for these four years? Can I not resist
" the impulse? No, I am become both
" ferocious and cowardly! I am going
" to see her again, and death is in my
" heart!

"heart!—Methinks the oppressive load
"of celestial vengeance menaces to crush
"my criminal head!"

The reading of this paper caused so strange an impression on me, that I immediately closed the fatal pocket-book, bathing it with my tears, and never opened it since.

An interesting period arrived, and diverted me from the gloomy thoughts so painful a recollection had occasioned. My daughter had just attained her sixth year; this anniversary was to me a delightful day. Alphonsine, as I said before, had never heard me sing or play on the guitar, and was totally ignorant of there being such an art as that of music.

On the morning of that day I gave her a longer lesson on religious subjects than usual, and our prayers lasted longer than on any other day: her piety was of that tender and natural turn, which it takes in those hearts whose original purity remains unpolluted: she listened to me with a soft emotion, and prayed with the greatest fervor. When thus disposed, I conducted her towards the oratory, which we called our chapel or church. As soon as we entered the place, she knelt down before the crucifix, which she knew stood by the side of the fountain; I than sang a sort of hymn in Spanish, which I accompanied with my guitar. Alphonsine uttered a shriek of joy and surprise; and the sensation which she experienced was so strong, that she burst

into

into tears, exclaiming: "It is God him-"self who speaks!"—She rushed into my arms, when I made her feel my guitar, and in a few words explained to her the supposed prodigy. She entreated me to go on; I resumed my guitar, and sang a long hymn.

When I had done, Alphonsine, transported with delight, embraced my knees and kissed the guitar; for she could not persuade herself but what this instrument was an animated being. She again entreated me to sing; which request I complied with, and sang hymns and anthems for upwards of an hour.

During the whole of that day we talked of nothing but music; and I saw, with

an extreme satisfaction, that Alphonsine evinced a passionate liking for that admirable art, the idea of which was closely connected in her mind and heart with sentiments of religion. I told her that music had been invented only to sing the praises of the Lord, and give more effect to our pious effusions. She intreated me to teach her to sing and play on the guitar, and I began that very day to give her her first lessons. Ever since that time I have always lulled Alphonsine to sleep with singing a hymn, and awakened her in the morning by saluting her ear with the same sound; and we never failed, morning and evening, to visit our oratory, and there to sing together anthems translated into Spanish verse.

I had obtained from Don Sancho another guitar smaller than my own, castanets, and a tabor. Alphonsine soon learnt to play on these instruments; her ear was very good, and she accompanied me remarkably well when I played on the guitar. This recreation, which to her proved delightful, gave her a degree of vivacity to which she had hitherto remained an utter stranger. When our little concert was over, she embraced me with transports, incessantly repeating how very happy she was. These effusions from her moved and pleased me exceedingly.—Alas! of all the blessings in life she possesses none but a tender mother, and is deprived of every thing which constitutes happiness; and yet it is no less true that she has always been

happier than the greater part of those children who are the favourites of fortune. I have not only contrived to render all her sensations virtuous, but I have been exceedingly cautious not to excite her feelings too much. I have suspended as it were the use of her faculties, in order to prepare her real enjoyments. All the children whom pleasures have cloyed, enjoy nothing; they know all, before they can be qualified to enjoy or appreciate any thing; and we know that it is chiefly from surprise that admiration arises. We are from our cradle so completely surrounded with the wonders of nature and art, that they no longer strike us when we attain those years when we are capable to judge of them; none amongst us can remember the first time when we saw

or heard something strikingly beautiful. There is no child who can receive from music the same impression as Alphonsine received, who, besides, thinks she pleases the Almighty by studying and improving herself in an art consecrated to the celebrating of his goodness. I was obliged to use infinite patience in my mode of teaching her, for in this obscurity she could only learn by the ear and habit; but her voice is so clear, and her ear so good, she is endowed with so much natural understanding, that at the expiration of seven or eight months she began to sing duets with me, accompanying herself on the guitar. This occupation infused inexpressible recreations in our solitude: Alphonsine seemed delighted, while I on my own part experienced the

 most

most grateful sensations in hearing those pure and infantine sounds ascending as it were through the vaulted roofs, to hail and bless our Creator. Not wishing that she should ever be overheard from the wicket, I only allowed her to sing in our chamber at her lessons, and in the oratory after our prayers; taking care to tell her that music being destined only to add charms to divine worship, it would be unbecoming to intermix it with profane recreations, so that she never was tempted to sing during our long perambulations about the cavern. We then conversed together, or I told her some little stories; and on returning to our chamber, I gave her lessons of arithmetic and French, and instructed her in religious subjects; after which we proceeded

to

to some little games which I had invented for her. She never seemed to experience any *ennui*; but she had a sort of habitual melancholy, which for the last twelve months particularly seemed to proceed more from her extreme sensibility than from our situation.—She never laughed; she sighed often; she spoke but little, and never cried but from soft emotions, and tears were with her the result of feelings of gratitude and tenderness. We always embraced each other after having prayed together, and I never received these embraces without shedding some tears. I had taught her of religion as much as I could, without making her too well acquainted with the nature of our situation. She is ignorant of the existence of mankind, but she knows that

the Lord created two innocent beings, whom he placed in a delightful abode; but that these two beings having displeased him, life ever since that time became a constant scene of trials and hardships. I have spoke to her concerning redemption and other chief points of the Christian faith, and particularly of the felicity of the elect and the angels. She often asks me to give her some explanation of the heavenly abode; to which I answer, that our understanding is too weak and confined to permit us to form any idea of the happiness which the Lord has reserved to those who have faithfully served him, and that death alone can make us acquainted with it. I particularly endeavour to describe the delights which the soul of the just will taste, when, stripped

of its mortal coil, it will spring into the bosom of its Creator; and I never fail to add: "We are placed here, my Al-
"phonsine, only to wait, in love and
"humility, the approach of that great
"day when we both are to begin an
"an eternal life, replete with happiness
"and glory, during which we shall be
"always together, and most supremely
"happy." As nothing can possibly weaken the salutary impression which these great truths have made on the soul of Alphonsine, she is deeply and unalterably penetrated with them. Convinced that God is always present with us, and that the angels keep a watchful eye over us, when I quit her to go to the wicket she regrets my absence; but still she does not think herself alone, and during

the whole interval remains in the attitude of profound respect before the omnipresent Deity, praying, and sometimes singing hymns, with a peculiar fervor and expression of love and piety.

When she asked me if the place which we inhabit is the whole extent of the universe, I answered there were several other parts of the world equally peopled by other creatures, but that we could not hold any converse or intercourse with them, because the distance they were at from our world was too great.

I gradually accustomed her to walk about without holding my hand, and gave her some little commissions to execute, telling her the number of paces she was

to

to walk; and after some time I suffered her to go alone to the fountain. After these little excursions, during which I often followed her unknown to her, she never failed to throw herself in my arms on her return. I felt her heart in a violent palpitation, and we both experienced all the joy people commonly feel after a long absence.

I never had played on any instrument in my chamber, in order that Alphonsine might not hear me, and was ignorant that a remarkable echo was heard in that place, repeating even three times words of more than one syllable. This echo proceeded from the cavern where the well was, the door of which was covered with a piece of tapestry; and to hear the

echo, it was of course requisite that the door should be opened. One very sultry day I carried my arm-chair that way, and in order to enjoy the coolness of the cave, I opened the door and raised the hanging tapestry; after which, taking Alphonsine on my knees, I desired her to sing the last strophe of an ode which she was imperfect in. She obeyed. The last words of this strophe were *Glory to God!* and when Alphonsine ceased, we heard a soft voice issuing from the cave, and repeating three times, *Glory to God!*—Alphonsine started, and exclaimed: "An angel singing also!"—The echo repeated *also.* "O Heavens!" exclaimed she, "the angel answers!" and she fell on her knees. . . . I was both surprised and deeply affected myself. —

Meanwhile

Meanwhile I said: " No, my child,
" this is no angel; no doubt but those
" celestial spirits are ever present, and
" protect us at all times; but we are far
" from that state of perfection which
" might give us a claim to hear the Al-
" mighty speak to us by his angels."—
" Well," replied Alphonsine, " this must
" be some human creature that found its
" way to us!"—I then endeavoured to
explain to her the nature of an echo; and
as she gives implicit faith to whatever I
say, she believed me without hesitation;
but as this circumstance increased greatly
her surprise, she kept incessantly enqui-
ring, " But how can a stone speak?"—
She would have found it infinitely more
credible and natural that an angel should
praise the Lord, and speak to us. Her
faith,

faith, which nothing has ever weakened, is so lively, that a miracle would cause her more gratitude than astonishment.

This echo added greatly to the happiness of Alphonsine; she kept repeating to it every thing kind she could think of, and we never failed every evening to go and hear the words *Glory of God!* repeated by the echo after each of us.

On reaching her eighth year Alphonsine spoke both French and Spanish so well, and knew so many lines by heart in both languages, that I began to teach her English. Her application, her docility, her tender veneration for me, were the delight of my existence; but I was more than ever tormented with the desire of seeing

seeing her. I looked at her once every two or three months during her sleep, but I could only just steal a transient glance at her. I was ignorant of the colour of her eyes, and the beautiful flaxen of her hair led me to suppose they must be blue; I could, by the touch, find out they were very long, and that her nose, always concealed by the bandage, was of the most delicate and perfect form. How handsome she must be! what pleasure should I have in seeing her walking about, or attiring her with a dress both elegant and simple! I cut off a small lock of her hair, which I always wear in my bosom; and at night, when I work in my oratory to make her garments, I invariably place this cherished lock before me, and fondly gaze on that hair

finer

finer and softer than silk itself, and of such a beautiful colour.—Oh, that I had her picture! I drew her face, partly from fancy, with the bandage concealing the upper part of it. I find some resemblance in this but indifferent sketch, which of course could not convey the singular beauty of that alabaster skin, which no sun or breath of wind had ever tarnished.

Every morning, after having dressed my daughter, I take a particular pleasure in adorning her head as if I could see her: I braid her long ringlets in a thousand various forms, and tastefully binding them with ribbons, I fancy that I see her thus adorned during the remainder of the day. From what I have seen of

her

her ſace, I can form a very tolerably just idea of the whole of her phisiognomy, which idea remains so invariable that nothing can alter it. Whenever she speaks, I really see her moved or smiling according to the expression of what she has said. It seems to me that her looks (which nothing yet has fixed) must only have an angelic expression of calm, innocence, and serenity. I cannot represent to myself her glance fixed on me; my imagination denies me the sweet comfort of fancying myself the object of her looks; I see them perpetually wandering about, and this idea afflicts me! One of Alphonsine's greatest pleasures is to comb and braid my hair, which she does but slowly, though with infinite address: I have suffered it to grow long, in

order

order to afford her this amusement. When she has done dressing my hair, she never fails to draw her hand gently over my head several times, in order to judge how far she has succeeded in her fanciful task; and, instead of saying, *and now it is very pretty*, she says, *Now this is well done*, or *this will do very well*.

For some time Leonora had come but once a week to the wicket, but then she brought two baskets instead of one; and at all times she gave me my daily allowance, independent of any extraordinary supply to lay by in store, in such abundance, that we might easily have subsisted a third person on what we had left. But, on a sudden, Leonora came twice a day, and brought me an enor-

mous

mous quantity of provisions; and as I visited the wicket but once a week, I was not aware of this at first. On the fifth day she rang the bell: I ran to the wicket, and found a score of baskets filled with eatables of every description, and an infinite number of other necessary articles which Leonora had also brought in her pockets. She alarmed me exceedingly, by apprizing me that she should be obliged to go to Madrid, though she added, she should not be absent for more than a month or six weeks at most. This journey caused me extreme uneasiness, as she refused to tell me the cause of it, which I have never been able to discover since; but she at the same time gave me some consolation, by assuring me that she would avail herself of this good opportunity

portunity to deposit her will in the hands of a respectable notary whom she was acquainted with. During the fifteen days which followed this conversation, she never ceased bringing me additional provisions to lay in store. I asked her, in the room of bread, to supply me with rice, potatoes, and chesnuts, and intreated her likewise to let me have a chafing-dish and lamp, in order that I might be able to cook these things, which she granted, after having at first made considerable difficulties. I was so warm and affectionate in my expressions of gratitude, that she voluntarily added to her former kindness the offer of a few bottles of oil and a few pounds of candles, which gave me the greater pleasure, as I was almost out of my stock of tapers.

Shortly

Shortly after Leonora told me that she was to set off the next day; and on her bidding me farewell, I could not refrain from shedding tears. We were indebted to her for the preservation of our lives, and she had just shewn herself so provident and kind, that my love and gratitude alone could repay the obligations which I owed her.

I was rather more melancholy than usual during the first days of Leonora's absence: the idea that there were no persons left in the castle except two waiting women, who knew nothing of my existence, alarmed me extremely, as I considered myself totally abandoned in case Leonora's return should be protracted. Meanwhile, what with the old

 and

and new stock of provisions, we had enough to last us upwards of eight months.

I took good care not to be extravagant with the oil and candles which Leonora had left me, and made use of no other light but what the spirits of wine under the chafing-dish afforded me, which however I found perfectly sufficient; and while our rice and potatoes were boiling, I worked at mending my daughter's garments; for I carried on my cookery at a distance from my chamber during the night, and at the time Alphonsine was asleep.

Leonora was absent for about two months. She had left me apparently with

subsided, I announced to her this unexpected gift, to which she answered, in that mild tone that she usually adopts when she refuses to accept offers, that she did not wish to deprive me of such an elegant and valuable trinket. I easily found means to persuade her that in such a situation as mine it could be of no use, and the next day insisted on her accepting the box and casket; in return for which I had the satisfaction, in the course of the week, to receive a small bottle of oil and matches, which Leonora brought me of her own accord, for I had not ventured to ask her for any thing whatever. About two or three months after, Leonora one day, and unexpectedly, began to talk of Don Sancho, and repeatedly and affectedly expatiated on his

extreme generosity. I understood very well that she wished to ascertain whether, besides the casket, he had not made me some other presents; and without pretending to know her meaning, I told her the truth, that he had not given me any thing besides a small clock and a watch, adding, that the clock was so much out of order that it was of no use to me, but that I possessed a very handsome old watch which had become useless to me, and that I had always forgotten to offer it to her. Two days afterwards I gave her the watch and clock, and Leonora evinced all her former goodness to me. The first time that she came again to the wicket, she rang the bell under a very frivolous pretext, and then commenced gossiping, which she very rarely did.

She told me suddenly that she had bethought herself, that if the watch which I had remaining did not go, it would be impossible for her to get it set in order, because it would be found out that it belonged to Don Sancho, and therefore that she could not venture to give it to a watchmaker. I knew very well the meaning of all this; I always carried an excellent watch about me, which I immediately made her a present of, though with great regret: I received in exchange a great clumsy copper repeater, and unfortunately in very bad order, on which account I frequently passed five or six days running without knowing the time, which was a great privation to me; but I would have made greater sacrifices still, to preserve Leonora's good will. I stood

much in need of it, and I felt the good effects of it the summer following. My daughter was eight years and a half old, and until that moment I had kept all kinds of perfume from her: the only agreeable scent that she was acquainted with at present was that of oranges, lemons, strawberries, and apples; she was so delighted with the scent of these fruits, that she rubbed her hands with them, and always kept one sort or other to smell to. I asked Leonora to give me a rose-tree in full blossom, in a small flower-pot, and told Alphonsine that they were the natural productions of the earth, the delightful works of God who created them for our pleasure, but that they only grew in one particular season of the year. I had often extolled to my

daughter

time, that she should not like them the less; and that after what I had done to enable her to pluck them without danger, she should always prefer them to every other flower; in short, that she should never smell that sweet perfume without recollecting my tenderness as well as goodness.

On the second day after this, Alphonsine found four new roses on the bush, and she had the pleasure of watering this little shrub herself. The following week I placed in her way, in one of her walks, five small pots of mignonet, which I had in the same manner put into the ground. When the mignonet was faded, I replaced it by some mint and sweet marjorum. Alphonsine admired the astonishing

nishing diversity of all these scents, and the pleasing variety of divine goodness. She had ere this made those reflections on her eating fruit, seven or eight sorts of which only she was acquainted with.

Should we abuse the goodness of Providence who thus lavishingly bestows its bounties on us, by not appreciating, its value? How guilty was I of this inconceivable ingratitude! I have breathed the fresh and pure air, I have walked upon the enamelled fields; I could contemplate the majestic beauty of the heavens, the forests, and the sea; the great orb of day and night, that shed on me their brilliant rays and guides my steps. I have enjoyed all the treasures of nature, and all the superfluities of luxury and of art,

art; and still complaining and discontended, am far from finding myself happy, whilst this infant, deprived of light, enclosed in a dungeon, enjoys life, and every instant blesses her Creator!—

The flowers, which from time to time we met with in the cavern, rendered this summer particularly agreeable to my daughter. When our flowers were gone, I obtained from Leonora some large bunches of lavender and thyme, with which Alphonsine amused herself by plucking off the seeds and putting them into small bags, which she tied up with red ribbon. We celebrated the four annual great festivals: I had carefully preserved some of the perfumes which Don Sancho had given me, together with a

small

small phial of essence of roses; and, on Christmas-day I sprinkled a few drops of that essence upon Alphonsine's tippet: she asked me many questions about it, and I persuaded her that, seeing her particular fancy for roses, I had with a great deal of care extracted and collected their juice, from which I had at length made that essence; and I completed all her joy and gratitude by making her a present of this small phial.

At the end of that winter I learnt with horror from Leonora, that the Count had settled in the castle, and that the King having exiled him to that estate, he would never quit it; but Leonora somewhat revived me; by telling me the Countess was with him, together with several

" spect. Be you not so unreasonable, " you ought to be cautious in your re- " quests." These were her very expressions, which appeared to me ridiculous; but when she spoke thus to me, there seemed something persuasive in her reasoning: I answered her with good faith, and there was no dissembling in my submission. I was so penetrated by the care which she took of my life, that I never ventured to ask her for any thing but with a great deal of timidity. I reflected on the observation which she had made, and conceived it would have been abusing her goodness. I could now no longer consider her as the accomplice of my persecutor: without her, my Alphonsine would have drunk the poisoned milk which killed Azor. I regarded Leonora,

not as my gaoler, but as my benefactress. Would it not have been unpardonable in me not to consider what she did do for me, because she did not do more? With good management of that light which I still had by me, it would last me for six or seven months: to be saving of this stock now become so precious, I contrived some means which were successful. I had by me a great quantity of paper, and among the rest about fifty volumes of novels, and also three jars of old butter; I made some cotton wicks that I twisted into rolls of buttered paper: this kind of candle stood extremely well in a candlestick, and being about a foot long, lasted about twenty minutes, and burnt extremely well. This invention made me extremely happy; and as I had by

by me a great quantity of matches and tinder, it enabled me to continue my washing and my other little occupations for my daughter once a week, for two whole years.

Alphonsine awaited the spring with impatience; she hoped to find her flowers, and thanks to Leonora who supplied us with them. She now became acquainted with the violet and the lily, which I had set in her very path for more than a month. The new pleasure of forming nosegays, agreeably occupied all her leisure; and soon after, she was delighted with roses *without thorns,* in the oratory. At the end of August I planted in several parts of the cavern a great quantity of orange shrubs, bearing

flowers and fruits: all these little artifices produced the effect which I had hoped for, as they formed so many enchanting spots for Alphonsine in the cavern.

Alphonsine now entered in her eleventh year; the days of her infancy had now nearly passed. From that time a terrific thought often disturbed my tranquillity: I trembled on reflecting that there was nothing to indicate my speedy deliverance, and that the finest years of my daughter's youth would pass away in this dungeon. Leonora, and even the Count, were considerably older than myself; I therefore might naturally hope to survive them, and to recover my liberty: but this might not take place perhaps for

five-and-twenty or thirty years. Alas! perhaps I was destined to behold my daughter until time had destroyed her bloom and her features! Ah, should my heart not be gladdened with those happy days, I shall have grown doubly old! This child, so dear and worthy to be so, has surpassed all my expectations, and all my maternal ambition: she appears to me so much above her age by her mind and disposition, that I am persuaded that she is indebted for part of the progress which she made to the privation of light. A person born blind, whom nature has not indulged with strong intellectual powers, is nothing but an automaton; while he whose mind is perfectly organized does think more even at the age when reflection is but rare,

because his ideas never offer to him any thing under a material form; therefore they are always distant, as no material image can find a place either in reason or imagination. Thus, when Alphonsine thought of me, she could not represent to herself my figure; it was my tenderness, and my care only, which could strike her imagination.

The sight fills our imagination with pictures; but far from expanding our thoughts, it does but confine them by always deceiving us. Nothing in sight itself gives us a true idea of infinity; on the contrary, it limits every thing: the horizon is broken by the sea; the waves in their turn, and the forests and mountains, seem enclosed by the sky; but the uni-

form

form obscurity of a dark night has no limits.

Alphonsine had profited by all my lessons: none of my instructions were lost; no one could contradict them; none could combat them by evil counsels, pernicious examples, or the seductions of pride. With what advantage do we thus give instructions!

In the course of this winter my cruel persecutor made some other attempts against my life, all of which were averted by the means of Leonora. She told me some time after, that he would never more renew these black designs, adding that his health was quite destroyed. This intelligence caused in me a secret joy

 which

which still filled me with horror; I entreated Leonora never to speak of him again. Ever since that time I never heard his name pronounced. I prayed to God for him at the same time, trying to banish every recollection of his wicked deeds. I presumed that his health was still alarming: for three or four months afterwards Leonora made me a present of a small bottle of oil, and promised to supply one with the same quantity every month. "My dear Leonora," said I, on receiving this present, "be assured "that if ever I revisit the day, you shall "be better recompensed by me than by "your master." During the whole of that spring and the following summer, I lived in constant expectation of some great event. However, time passed on: I have

been

been nearly thirteen years in the cavern; my Alphonsine had attained her twelfth year, and we are still captives. Great God! will my barbarous oppreſſor suffer me to survive him? What means will he not employ to corrupt Leonora? On the verge of the grave, gold and promises will cost him nothing.—But for eight years past Leonora has protected and defended me.—I have violent palpitations at heart which disturb me of my nightly rest . . . my hands and limbs tremble now more than ever. . . . . Alphonsine perceives it, and is alarmed: she often puts questions to me which distract my mind . . . she knows that we grow old, and after becoming decrepid we die. She asked me a few days ago whether I was still very young? To which I answered

 her,

her, " You know very well that we may
" live perhaps upwards of a hundred
" years, and that I am but twenty-nine."
—" Ah, but I know some lines that say,
" *trembling old age.*"—" This trem-
" bling which I have had for some
" time, is an indisposition which I am
" subject to; it will soon be over."—
" I am twelve years old; so, mamma,
" you are seventeen years older than I."
—" Yes; happily we are subject to
" death at all ages."—" Wherefore do
" you say *happily?*"—" I am think-
" ing of myself; if I should die, my
" child, it will be but an absence."—
" Yes, very short, for we may die of
" grief."—" Dear child! it is right
" that we should submit to the will of
" God."—" Oh, I should bless Him;

" you

" you will be more happy in his bosom
" than in that of your Alphonsine. But
" I am exceedingly grieved when you
" quit me, to go and fetch our provi-
" sions: if you stay more than half an
" hour I cry; how could I live without
" you a whole day, two days?"—" But
" are you not sure that if you should
" lose me, God would enlighten your
" mind as much as you would stand in
" need of."—" Of what service would
" that be to me? You only employ your
" understanding for me."—"I have been
" alone in the world, and I have lived."
" —How! did you not deplore the loss
" of her whom you loved?"—" Did I not
" tell you that I had a mother?"—
" Ah, mamma! your mother did not
" love you as you love me!"

I had never told Alphonsine that there was wickedness in the world, but the religious precepts which I had taught her had apprised her of it. "Since God created a hell," said she, "there must "necessarily exist some wicked crea- "tures?" She made on this a very moving reflection; she conceived that those wicked persons must, during their infancy, have lived with other persons than their mother; "for," added she, "a mother and daughter who always "live alone together, must be good." She thanked Heaven that he had not created her in a country so peopled, "where perhaps," said she, "a dozen "persons are seen assembled together at "one time."—Behold this infant, singular on earth by her innocence and sensibility!

bility! this angelic being, whose senses are as pure as her heart, in whom every sensation is united in sentiments of virtue! brought up between God and the mother who gave her life, whose ears never had heard but the praises of her Creator, and the tender instructions of a mother; whose lips have never uttered falsity or slander; who never knew pride but by the history of the fallen angels, and had no idea of vanity, envy, jealousy, calumny, or anger . . . "Oh, my God! if
" this child, which in the immensity of your
" love you bestowed on me, and after-
" wards so miraculously preserved to me,
" if this darling child is to lose out of this
" abode her virtue and her purity, let us
" die here; let me for ever be deprived of
" the happiness of seeing her, and hearing

 " her

" her praise, that she may be completely
" matured in this gloominess and growold
" under these vaulted roofs! . . . But if I
" do not deceive myself in myprojects and
" my hopes, and if I should be able to ter-
" minate with success her education on
" earth, ah! endow her with heavenly
" light, and display to her enchanted sight
" all the wonders of thy creation!"

End of Diana's Story.

CHAP. XXIV.

THE reading of this manuscript, which more than once was bathed with the Countess's tears, redoubled her friendship for the unhappy victim of lawless love and ferocious vengeance. She became more sensible than ever how valuable a gift piety is to us, since there are no misfortunes, however desperate, but what it softens and enables us to bear. This story clearly manifested also the urgent necessity of curbing the violence of our passions, since the love of Don Sancho

cho had proved the source of as many ills to Diana as the hatred and avarice of the Count; for, with a soul naturally generous and kind, Don Sancho had become the accomplice of the greatest of villains, while Leonora, restrained by some few religious principles, and spite of her natural meanness of sentiments, hard-heartedness, and extreme avarice, had all on a sudden resolved to protect Diana with a most praiseworthy fortitude and perseverance. The Countess was extremely eager to know what had been Diana's and Alphonsine's first impressions at the instant of their deliverance; and she spoke of it to Diana, who promised to gratify her curiosity. Don Alvarez had departed for Madrid: Diana and her daughter still dined alone, ac-

cording

cording to Diana's request; but on this day, about an hour after dinner, Diana sent for the Countess, who, taking Ines with her, immediately proceeded to their apartment. There in the presence of Alphonsine, who had not yet quitted her mother for an instant, Diana, yielding to the Countess's desire, resumed her story as follows:

"That day, the finest of my life, was not ushered in by any lucky forebodings whatever; on the contrary, I felt, on rising in the morning, rather more melancholy than usual. For the last two days the most gloomy ideas had incessantly troubled my mind, accompanied by a mistrust of Leonora, which I could not account for to myself, and which I looked

looked upon as a secret heavenly warning of our approaching doom. When she rang the bell, I shuddered, being persuaded something fatal was at hand. When I drew near the wicket she heard me, and knocked three times; and on her inviting me to drink immediately of the wine which she had brought, as I had some by me in store, I began to suspect it was a poisoned draught.—But how shall I describe the sudden revolution which took place in all my ideas, when I heard the delightful sounds of a new voice, of a voice unknown, and which I almost immediately recognized to be yours!—At once to recover my liberty and happiness, once more to behold the light and the sky! to receive the reward of thirteen years sufferings! . . . I fell on

my

my knees before that door I was going to pass; my whole heart sprang at once towards its supreme Benefactor, and I thanked him with my tears. . . . No prayer, no language can convey what I felt! . . . I flew to my daughter; she alone was the object of all my joy, and transports of gratitude. . . . I took her in my arms, and dragged her towards the wichet, exclaiming, "Oh, my Alphon-"sine! we are happy at last! you will "know a felicity which you can form "no idea of."—"How!" replied she, "are we going to Heaven? are we go-"ing to die both together?"—I made no reply; my tears choaked me, and denied me the power of utterance; but spite of the obscurity I walked extremely fast; I seemed to have wings. . . . I felt Alphon-

sine

sine trembling in my arms, her tears trickling down my face . . . we approached, and I heard persons demolishing the door. " O my child!" said I, " let " us thank the Lord!" I stopped, and we prostrated ourselves. Alphonsine grew confirmed in the idea our death was at hand. I was scarcely sensible, and felt myself unable to answer her questions. Besides, the noise increasing, we could not hear each other's voice. Alphonsine clung close round my neck.— On a sudden the noise became louder still; O delightful moment! . . . The door was flung open. I perceived lights . . . I looked at my daughter; she put her hands on her face, uttering a shriek that resounded in my inmost soul: her head reclined on my bosom—a most terrific

rific alarm succeeded so many transports, and I fell senseless on the ground.

" When I recovered, I found myself free, and my Alphonsine lying by my side; but she had not revived yet!—In vain did the physician soothe my apprehensions; the moment of my waking was horrible!—At length her eyes opened, and the doctor concealed himself behind the curtain. I had dismissed you all, and spoke to her. She looked at me with inexpressible delight; " Oh, " mamma," said she, " we are in Hea- " ven!"—I could not divest her of the idea; she looked on her fainting fit as death, and the enjoyment of sight, which caused her an inexpressible sensation, persuaded her that we had become other beings.

beings. . . . The sudden flash of the torches in the cavern had only caused her a most painful sensation. She told me since that, on perceiving it, she felt as if *a knife had been plunged into her eyes*, and she thought she was dying of that supposed wound when emotion and surprise caused her to faint away. As soon as my Alphonsine, lying in bed by my side, opened her eyes and heard my voice, she felt my visage and looked at me earnestly. " What is it you? is it " you," said she, " my dear mother! " my Diana! you have preserved the " same sweet sound of voice! We are " always to remain together in eternity! " Do you feel as I do? Oh, what name " shall I give to this celestial faculty, " which we had not during our former

" life,

" life, and that proceeds from our eyes?
" —I feel you, and my eyes feel you
" also; they inform me better than the
" sense of touching?—This is your hand
" that I press . . . I draw mine back, and
" still I know yours is there! O what
" delight! what felicity!" and while she
spoke thus, she sobbed and wept; she
thanked Heaven, and embraced me with
incredible transports. For the first time
she obeyed me no more; she seemed incapable
to listen. At length I placed my
hand on her mouth to impose silence, and
said to her, " Pray be silent, you afflict
" me" . . . She appeared greatly surprised,
and remained motionless. " Yes,"
replied I, " you afflict me, because you
" deceive yourself." I then explained
to her the truth in a few words; but I
could

could easily see that she did not understand me. Exhausted by such powerful emotions, I saw her turn pale, and on the point of fainting away again. I called the physician, who administered a few drops of ether to her, and held strong salts to her nose: she revived, but at sight of the doctor seemed exceedingly frightened. He concealed himself . . . I attempted to instruct her again, but she began to tell me all that she had told me before; she examined my features, named them by turns and felt them, while she held me embraced, and bathed my face with her tears whenever I told her to be silent. This state lasted for upwards of two hours, at the expiration of which she felt thirsty. Ines appeared, and gave her a glass of orgeat. She started at sight of Ines, and

ex claimed,

exclaimed, " This is an angel!" . . . When she had drank, I told her that souls in Heaven did not drink. This reflection struck her, and I succeeded at length to obtain her attention, but not entirely to persuade her, for she could not conceive how mortal creatures could enjoy that faculty. She scarcely slept an instant during the whole night; and whenever her eyes were closed, she fancied she was still in the cavern, and startled fom her slumber, calling on me aloud. Several cooling draughts were ministered to her, and she slept for about three hours in the morning. With what transports did I look at her during that interval! At length I saw her without a bandage; and although the recess the bed stood in was extremely dark,

I was perfectly able to distinguish her features. How very inadequate was the conception which I had hitherto formed of her countenance! how short did my representation of her mildness and interesting expression prove from the reality! . . . I felt vexed at the idea that for upwards of twelve years I had cherished an image which was not her own!" . . . Here Alphonsine interrupted her mother, to embrace her most tenderly . . . and Diana resuming, " The next day," continued she, " I remained alone with my daughter. As soon as we were up, Alphonsine met with new subjects of surprise: if I removed but a few paces from her—" Oh Heavens!" said she, extending her arms, " I cannot touch " you; and yet, though I cannot hear

" you,

" you, you are not lost, and I seem still
" with you! I have no occasion to ask
" you, *Are you here, mamma?* I have
" a knowledge of your form and fea-
" tures; I still preserve you near me, by
" directing my eyes on you.—I reach
" you without touching you.— I know
" what you are about, without having any
occasion to guess.—Ah! angels alone
can have been endowed with such
" gifts, and experience what I feel!"—I
resumed my explanations; Alphonsine
listened, and understood me at last.
Without entering into the detail of our
misfortunes, I told her that I had been
confined in a cavern; that I had con-
cealed my situation from her, in order
that she should not be so unhappy; that
we were set at liberty, and that she was

 going

going to be made acquainted with that world in which God had placed human creatures. I explained to her the use of sight, of that admirable organ, the use of which I had so long deprived her of, in order that she might not experience most bitter regrets, and grow tired of our confinement. Alphonsine, delighted at this, asked me a thousand questions; but I found it impossible fully to gratify her curiosity, because she asked many things of me, the explanation of which was much above her comprehension. She carefully examined every thing about the room, feeling every object which she looked at, and finding all beautiful, even the dark blue baize hung around the room. Although the light we have is much more feeble than that of the

moon,

moon, she is perfectly able to distinguish every object, and I am certain that it will be a long time yet before her eyes will be able to endure a stronger light. When our dinner was brought in, she stopped for a long time before she began to eat, admiring every article which had been placed on the table, the china, glasses, and plate; and incessantly repeated that she could not sufficiently admire and praise the goodness of the Almighty in providing all those things for our use. "What can he have for us "in Heaven besides?" added she. I raised her admiration and gratitude still higher, by telling her that what she saw was only the produce of human industry, and that the works of God, which she was unacquainted with, were far supe-

rior to all the wonders of art. She had no idea of distances; she extended her arms to reach something which lay at the other extremity of the room; and those objects which by the sense of touch were usually most familiar to her, she did not recognize by sight. I have observed that, since she sees, she is bereft of reflection and application. We have resumed our lessons, but she continues remarkably absent. The least thing is sufficient to take off her attention; and in order to collect her ideas, she is forced to shut her eyes, and thus she listens to me. But she will soon recover her natural habits: happiness cannot fail to improve and mature a mind so well organized as hers is by nature.

CHAP. XXV.

WHEN Diana had ceased speaking, the Countess addressed Alphonsine thus: "Ah, my dear Alphonsine, how much "are you indebted to your incompara-"ble mother! From the first moment "of your birth you have been the only "object of her love, of her every care "and thought!—Alphonsine is the soul "of Diana; Alphonsine is the principle "of Diana's actions, hopes, fears, and "reflections. Never did nature, habit, "and tenderness, unite two beings to-

"gether by more powerful bonds than "these; never did kindness, generosity, "and gratitude, weave so close, so sa- "cred, and so interesting an union!"

Alphonsine listened to this with pleasure, but she made no answer; she did not think it necessary to speak of her gratitude, and she never expressed it but to gratify as it were her own affectionate emotions; she felt so deeply, that any protestations in this respect would have appeared to her both useless and ridiculous: she bore the Countess sincere regard, because, as she said, the Countess *was a mother too*; meanwhile she neither would embrace her nor kiss her hand, these caresses being exclusively reserved for Diana alone. Alphonsine

phonsine sat now and then on the Countess and Ines's knees; she squeezed their hands, but she denied them every other testimony of affection. Don Alvares, when he kissed her hand, had made her laugh, as she considered this as a proof that *he looked upon her as a mother*; nevertheless she had preserved a very pleasing recollection of him; his interesting countenance had made some impression upon her.

Although they had now quitted the cavern upwards of a month, Diana had not yet ventured to inform her daughter that the human race consisted of another sex. Alphonsine was to be solemnly baptized at the expiration of three months; and Diana, wishing that she

should preserve that entire innocence she had hitherto lived in until that day, determined to let her remain in her state of ignorance for some time longer.

After an absence of a fortnight, Don Alvarez returned from Madrid, and brought with him Dazeli, who, having become a favourite at Court, had amassed a considerable fortune. Dazeli, who was then thirty years of age, joined to the most prepossessing countenance, a feeling mind, a cheerful disposition, and a great perspicuity and originality of conception. He had learnt, with transports of joy, that Diana was still living; and his attachment for her grew quite enthusiastic, on being informed how she had passed thirteen years in a gloomy cavern,

become

become a mother, and educated her infant in that dreary abode. The old Duke of Mendoce, grandfather of Diana, had, at his death, left all his disposable property to the Count of Moncalde; but the King caused a will, thus founded on error, to be annulled, and commanded the Count's relations to restore to Diana all this immense property, which her grandfather would not of course have deprived her of, had he been acquainted with the truth. Dazeli was intrusted with the care of making known this act of justice to Diana, who thus acquired a considerable addition to her own fortune.

Dazeli, on his arrival, first requested leave to see Donna Diana without any witnesses; but he found her with her daugh-

ter, whom she had never yet lost sight of for a minute. At sight of Donna Diana, Dazeli burst into a flood of tears, and ran to throw himself at her feet. Diana, with emotion, but still with that air of reserve and dignity which she preserved at all times, desired him to rise and sit down by her side. Dazeli had been warned; he was not to mention either the names of Don Sancho or Don Pedro. " Let us forget the past," said she: " I will remember nothing of it " but my faults, and those evils which " you have been exposed to endure for " my sake. You are acquainted with " my past adventure; but judge whether " I am to be pitied, with such a daugh- " ter to reward me!" ... Dazeli gazed with rapturous admiration on that beauti-

ful

ful child, whose existence and education had been so miraculous; and he was the more moved at the sight of her beauty, as she bore a striking resemblance to her mother. Exclamations of surprise and emotion were for some time the only language which he could utter.—About half an hour after he began to give Diana an account of the King's gracious proceedings towards him, adding that the whole Court took the strongest interest in her fate, and that her friends and relations would come in crowds to embrace her.—"Friends!" replied Diana, "I was too young to have any: of "all those persons whom I have known "formerly, you, Dazeli, are the only "one who has a claim to that title. I "will admit no one, and from this day

" I devote my life to God and to my
" daughter."

The Countess, who entered, followed by Don Alvarez, broke off this conversation. The moment Alphonsine perceived Don Alvarez, she ran to him, took hold of his hand, made him sit down, and placed herself on his knees. Diana called her back; and Don Alvarez, deeply moved at this behaviour, followed Alphonsine, and placed himself by her side. The chamber not being so obscure as during the first days, he was able to distinguish Alphonsine's features to more advantage, and he found her a thousand times more lovely than before his departure for Madrid.

In the evening Alphonsine spoke to her mother of nothing but Don Alvarez, whom, as she said, she loved already *at least as much* as Ines.

CHAP. XXVI.

After the death of the Count, on examining his papers, several small packets of poison were found in his secretary, together with the casket of Diana's jewels which Leonora had given him as soon as Diana had entered the cavern, and which the Countess immediately restored to Diana. The latter did not shew her daughter the contents; in the evening she opened it, and placed it by the side of a basket filled with hyacinths, telling her to chuse which she liked the best

best between the flowers and the jewels. Alphonsine did not hesitate, and immediately took the flowers: she had never seen any before; but she asked for some roses, and Diana told her they would not be in blossom till the time of her baptism. Alphonsine ever remembered with the greatest extasy those roses which were despoiled of their thorns by her mother's tenderness, and which so delighted her in the cavern.

Don Alvarez and Dazeli had been above eight days in the castle; and on Alphonsine's speaking of Don Alvarez, Diana told her, that she ought not to go and place herself on his knees, as she often did. "Would not you then," replied Alphonsine, "wish me to sit on

" those of Ines?" At this question Diana paused for some moments without answering. These new reflections, on the part of Alphonsine, persuaded Diana that it was necessary she should reveal to her a very important secret; and she meditated how she should make this communication; and employing in this application as much simplicity as delicacy, " Don Alvarez," answered she, " is not a woman; he is a being of ano-" ther species, although he is of the hu-" man race."—" How am I to understand " so strange an account? and is this " singular being called a man?"— " Yes; you know very well that the " two first creatures whom God formed " were Adam and Eve."—" Very well; " were not they two women?"—" No;

" Adam

" Adam was a man, and Eve was a wo-
" man."—" Did God wish that men
" and women should love each other,
" since he placed them together and alone
" in the terrestrial Paradise?"—" With-
" out a doubt; and this first union will
" teach you many things; in the first
" place, that a woman ought to love
" tenderly only one man, and that it is
" necessary that this sentiment should
" be consecrated by religion, because
" God himself had done it when he
" united Adam and Eve."—" But ever
" since Adam and Eve were driven from
" Paradise, how has religion consecrated
" that union?"—" By a ceremony per-
" formed in the church, and which is
" called matrimony. The man and the
" woman, who have made choice of

" each

" each other to pass their lives together
" with the consent of their mother,
" enter into this engagement in a church.
" A priest, who is God's represen-
" tative, receives their vows, which
" from that moment become inviola-
" ble and sacred." — " But they do
" not leave their mother after mar-
" riage?"—" Oh, no, if the mother and
" daughter desire it, and the man, who
" is now called a husband, does not or-
" der his wife to quit her mother."—
" Surely the woman does not obey such
" order?"—" Then she would be defi-
" cient in her duty. As soon as she is
" married, she only depends upon her
" husband; she always owes respect and
" tenderness to her mother, but she is
" now only under the authority of her
" husband."

" husband."—" I will never marry, and
" then I shall only have you to obey."
" But I will choose a husband for you,
" and I am sure he will not separate
" us."—" And who would you choose
" for me, mamma? "—" I do not know
" yet; I shall think of it when you
" are fifteen or sixteen years old."—
" Mamma, I hope then you will choose
" Don Alvarez for me."—This simplicity made Diana startle. " That is impossible," answered she.—" Why,
" mamma?"—" Because he has chosen
" another woman, and with the consent
" of his mother."—" Ines?"—" Yes,
" Ines and he are engaged. Don Alvarez is but seventeen years of age,
" and will go first on his travels; when
" he returns, he will marry Ines."—" I
" will

" will never be married; and for this
" reason, I shall not be uneasy on ac-
" count of the obedience which it would
" be necessary for me to pay my hus-
" band. But, mamma, is it our duty to
" respect the men?"—" Yes, in the
" marriage state."—" But wherefore?
" Do they possess a stronger mind and bet-
" ter reason than women?"—" They
" say so: besides, do not you see that
" they are taller and stronger than us?
" and as they employ that strength to
" protect and defend us, it is our duty
" to shew them gratitude and respect.
" In short, you ought to know that we
" cannot be united to them but by reli-
" gious bond, and that it is proper to
" treat them with politeness only when
" we are not married to them, and parti-

"cularly when they are engaged to ano-
"ther. Even Ines, although she is en-
"gaged to Don Alvarez, would not
"think of setting herself upon his knee,
"because she is not yet his wife. This
"reserve is called modesty."

Alphonsine was not contented with this explanation, and continued asking an infinite number of questions; so that her mother was obliged to refuse several times answering her, by saying, *You do not understand it; the explanation which you ask is above your comprehension.*— Diana on this occasion reaped the benefit of having accustomed her daughter, from her earliest infancy, to be contented with this answer.

CHAP. XXVII.

Don Alvarez, accompanied by his mother, together with Ines and Dazeli, went every day to pass two or three hours in Diana's chamber. The next day after the preceding conversation had taken place, as soon as Don Alvarez entered, Alphonsine in a thoughtless manner ran to him, and suddenly on recollecting what her mother had said the day before,, she stopped, and for the first time in her life

blushed.

blushed. This gave such strength and expression to her charming countenance, that every eye was fixed on her.—Alphonsine, seeing that she was looked at with a degree of surprise, her embarrassment increased: she could not support a sensation which was so new to her; she burst out into tears, and went to hide them in the arms of Diana.

Hitherto no person had praised Alphonsine's beauty; for Diana had in the first instance requested the Countess never to say a single word of her figure, and to caution all persons whom she brought into the room to observe the same: but at this moment the charge was entirely forgotten; every person present extolled the charms of her person and her fine

expression.

expression. Alphonsine, hearing these exclamations, perfectly understood that it was her countenance they were admiring: her tears ceased, and she listened attentively with pleasure, more so as she distinguished the voice of Don Alvarez, whose praises exceeded those of all the rest. She lifted up her head, and casting her eyes on Alvarez, she smiled. Don Alvarez and Dazeli approached her; and both, to have a better opportunity of looking at her, knelt down on a cushion which lay at the feet of Diana. Don Alvarez, struck with the attentive and curious air with which Alphonsine examined him, asked her whether she found any thing singular in him. Alphonsine, instead of answering him, took hold of his hand, which she drew near to that

of her mother saying, "How much larger "it is! Let me look at yours," said she, addressing herself to Dazeli—"Why! "this is larger still! I shall immediately "know a man."—"You know then," said Don Alvarez, "that I am not a "woman?"—"Yes, yes, I know it "very well." Diana hastened to break off this conversation, by intreating Don Alvarez and Dazeli to return to their places at the extremity of the chamber.

When Diana was alone with her daughter, she asked her whether she understood every thing which had been said of her figure. "Yes," answered Alphonsine: "it seemed to me that they "found as much pleasure in looking "at me, as I enjoy by viewing you;

" this very much surprised me, as I had
" never been told of any thing of
" the kind. Wherefore was it, mamma?"
—" Because, the moment you went
" to meet Alvarez, your modesty stop-
" ped you."...—" Yes, because I recol-
" lected what you told me yesterday."
—" Very well, that is what they saw;
" and as every person admires mo-
" desty, and that in fact nothing adds
" so much to the charms of a young
" person..."—" But, mamma, that was
" not my fault, if I never had modesty
" before, because I never knew any thing
" about man..."—" What effect did it
" produce on you, the praise which they
" bestowed on your figure?"—" If you
" had done the same sometimes, I
" should have enjoyed it much."—
" Why?"

" Why?"—" Because I should have
" thought that they were a proof of
" friendship, and because we are loved
" the more when we are handsome."—
" Did not I love you alone, before I
" saw you?"—" And you, mamma,
" did not I admire you as much, before
" I saw your handsome figure? I am
" more happy now that I can look at
" you, but I am not sensibly affected
" by it."—" Well, when they tell you
" that you are tender, good, and grate-
" ful . . . ."—" Oh, then I am moved,
" because it is that which makes you
" love me." Diana embraced Alphon-
sine for every one of those answers: it
never occurred to her that she ought to
have given her a lesson on her simplicity,
thinking that she would destroy the

 charm

charm of such delicate sentiment, by endeavouring to draw a moral result from it.

Two days after, Don Alvarez set out on a long journey, and came to take his leave of Diana. Alphonsine was moved at seeing tears flow from the eyes of Countess ; he could not conceive how her son could resolve to leave her ; he told her that it was the Countess's wish. Alphonsine threw herself into the arms of her mother, and pressed her to her bosom with an expression of gratitude ; she thought that she never would receive similar orders from her, for which she silently thanked her by her caresses, as she would not at that moment expatiate on the happiness of having so tender a

mother ;

mother. This language, though mute, was perfectly understood by Don Alvarez, and he felt in it as much delicacy as sensibility. He set off with Dazeli: the latter returned to court. They travelled together to Madrid, where Don Alvarez met the Tutor whom the Countess had chosen for his travelling companion.

Don Alvarez and Dazeli, while seated together in the carriage, fell into a deep reverie. After half an hour's silence, Dazeli turning to Don Alvarez said to him, "You are thinking of *her?*"—"Ah!" answered Don Alvarez, "what other object can occupy our "mind? Every other person seems but "common, when compared to her!"

 —"Yes,"

—" Yes," replied Dazeli sighing, " she
" is charming."—" No," said Don Al-
varez, " none other shall be the com-
" panion of my life! I have sworn it
" from the bottom of my heart. . .I know
" there are some obstacles which oppose
" this secret vow of mine, but I am sure
" I shall be able to conquer them "—
" Obstacles! . . . Her hand is promised
" to you."—" The hand of Alphon-
" sine!"—" Oh, I was talking of
" Ines."—" Brought up as I was with
" Ines, I feel for her every sentiment of
" a brother; but that does not preserve
" me from entertaining a passion."—
" But Alphonsine is only twelve years
" and a half old; can she inspire you
" alreadywith love?"—" When I see her
" again, she will be fifteen."—" Con-
" sider,

" sider, Dazeli, that I am the first
" young man whom she ever saw, the
" first and the only one yet on whom
" she smiled, and that in short I was
" the cause of her first blushes! . . . .
" And was it not I who first awakened
" in her the secret of beauty? Every
" person praised her, but she heard
" none but mine! she loves me, her
" eyes confessed it: that chaste, pure,
" and tender look, has discovered to me
" the happy fate that awaits us . . . ."—
" But your engagements with Ines! . . ."
" —I should think myself engaged, if I
" did not know that the heart of Ines
" is perfectly free. Ines bears to me
" the most tender friendship, but she
" has never entertained any other sen-
" timent towards me but as a sister:

" she is nineteen years of age, that is, two
" years older than myself; she possesses
" a certain superiority of reason, which
" pleases me, and which will be useful to
" me in a friend, but which would dis-
" tress me in a wife. How can we love
" each other? She knows me so per-
" fectly, she herself assisted in perfect-
" ing my education; she not only judges
" me as I am, but such as nature had
" formed me. I never shall be able to
" persuade her that an acquired quali-
" fication can please equally, to a natu-
" ral virtue; I shall never be able to
" carry on any illusion either in mind or
" disposition, as she knows precisely
" the bounds of the one, and all the de-
" fects of the other. How can I marry
" such a woman with pleasure, who con-

" siders

" siders herself as my tutor? a wo-
" man who has often punished me,
" and who never will lose the habit
" of reproving me? In short, how
" can I love a young person who never
" beholds me but as a being of no conse-
" quence? who, with a perfect purity
" of sentiments and manners, embraces
" me familiarly as she did seven or eight
" years ago?"—" It is true," said Da-
' zeli laughing, " that the intimacy pro-
" duced by marriage, would add nothing
" new in your habitual mode of living;
" except the prerogative of being jea-
" lous, and a greater spy on your con-
" duct. However, Ines is so handsome
" and possesses so much wit and talents,
" that I am sure at your return you will
" change your sentiments and opinion."

 —" Never:

—" Never. By the side of Alphonsine
" she appears to me so much of a wo-
" man, and so much older. . . . How
" quickly her talents, her mental ac-
" complishments, her knowledge of the
" world, for which she is so much ad-
" mired, would vanish, and make her
" appear old, were we to compare these
" pleasing acquirements to those na-
" tural graces, that affecting simplicity,
" the innocence of hat enchanting crea-
" ture who knows nothing but to love."
" . . .—"In short, you wanted no other
" wife but one brought up in a cave.''—
" I want Alphonsine! my dear Dazeli;
" you must promise me to write, and give
" me some account of her."—"I pro-
" mise to do that with all my heart."—
" What service you will render me! for
" all

" I dare not venture to speak of her to
" my mother, or even to Ines, who shews
" all my letters to her."—" Depend up-
" on my friendship."—" How much I
" shall be indebted to you!"—" In truth
" you will owe me nothing."

CHAP. XXVIII.

LET us now leave Don Alvarez with all the imprudence of his age, and all the vivacity of a romantic mind, confiding his projects and his passions to futurity; and let us, while he is prosecuting his travels, return to the kingdom of of Grenada.

The Countess had made up her mind to pass the whole of the year of a widowhood with Diana; but soon the visits became so numerous, that there always was a crowd

a crowd in the castle. Curiosity is a species of passion for persons in high life: in a life entirely consumed by dissipation, and consequently frivolous, in vain they torment themselves to vary their pleasures; such amusements, notwithstanding their divinity, soon became monotonous; as every pleasure which does not strongly attach the heart or the mind, cannot fail to be so in its result: it is therefore in order to escape ennui, that they seek with avidity after new sights, extraordinary things, for which reason all the world were desirous to behold a woman and her child who had passed thirteen years in a cavern. The most severe persons excused, though but feebly, the weakness of a woman who had suffered so severely and displayed so much forti-

tude

tude and resignation. The illegitimate birth of Alphonsine was ennobled by misfortune, by the tenderness of her mother, and even by the singularity of so romantic a history. But Diana had renounced the world for ever; she never saw the Countess and Ines but two or three hours each evening, and with the exception of the Curate she never received any visitors. Her piety and maternal tenderness were sufficient to confirm her in this resolution: besides, she thought that she could not with propriety introduce herself and her child to public view; and although she had placed all her happiness and pride in Alphonsine, she never forgot that she ought to blush for her birth, and that penitence alone could entitle her to the

miraculous

miraculous favours which Heaven in its bounty had ſhowered down upon her. Diana now had none but distant relations left, whom she would admit no more than any other: in vain they insisted, they complained, were offended, then grew cold; and while one accused Diana of misanthropy, the other decried it as affectation or insensibility. The most dissatisfied pretended that her intellects were impaired, while others maintained that she had sunk into a state of imbecility. These reports formed for some days the whole subject of conversation in Madrid; after which, Diana was as completely forgotten as if she had still been in the cavern.

Some time after her deliverance, Diana

told

told the reverend Curate that she wished to go to church alone, namely, without Alphonsine, to return thanks to God: the physician, fearing that strong air would have too much effect upon her, had declared that ſhe could not go out without danger before a month or ſix weeks. That time having elapsed, Diana told her daughter one morning, that she should leave her for two or three hours, as she wished to go to the parish church, which was at a mile and a half distance; till when she had never heard mass with Alphonsine but in a chapel by the side of her chamber. This moment was very painful, not only in consequence of its being their first separation, but because she was obliged to entrust Alphonsine into the hands of some other person;

she

she accordingly begged the Countess to ſtay with her all the time. Alphonsine wept, and said to her mother. " I shall, during " your absence, speak to God only to " whom you are going to pray. Con- " sider, mamma, that during the whole " time your Alphonsine will pray with " you; we shall not be together, but " we shall both of us be with God."— " My child," replied Diana, " it is " true that I am going out without you: " I shall cross a wood, and traverse the " fields; be assured, however, that I will " not enjoy but in your company the " sight of the heavens and of the fields. " Shut up in a close carriage, and co- " vered with a thick veil, I shall see " nothing; I shall not behold the de- " lightful spectacle of nature until I can

" contemplate

"contemplate it together with you."
Diana in fact enveloped herself in a black taffety cloak and hood that she drew entirely over her face, she got into a sedan-chair, drew the curtains close, and thus was carried to the church door; she returned in the same manner, without having seen the heavens or the fields, and without having forfeited her promise. Alphonsine was left alone with the Countess, as Diana had from a secret effect of jealousy excluded Ines; not wishing that her daughter should take any amusement during her absence. Alphonsine, according to her promise, did not speak a word to the Countess, but continued the whole time in prayer; but in about an hour she became very uneasy, seemed agitated, and wept.

wept. Diana, on her return, found her pale, trembling, and all in tears: then she repented that she had not recommended that every means should be employed to amuse her. Alphonsine was indisposed during the remainder of the day; and her mother and the Countess agreed that it was absolutely necessary, that he should be accustomed by degrees to bear more patiently the short absence of her mother.

CHAP. XXIX.

The Curate came every morning to give Alphonsine religious instructions. She awaited with the greatest impatience the epoch when she was to receive the baptism: that solemn day was fixed to develop and exhibit to her all the charms of nature in the greatest perfection and pomp in the month of July. Her window-curtains were always down, and fixed so that they were not to be

opened until after her baptism. Diana had taken her waiting-woman, but she never suffered any other person but herself to dress Alphonsine, or to stay alone a moment. Her maternal vigilance was so active and conspicuous, that Alphonsine never heard a single word, and had not received a single impression which could either displease her mother, or counteract her plan and projects. Alphonsine now became better acquainted with her room, and therefore less inattentive, and she again resumed her former application. Her surprise and her curiosity a great deal contributed to this happy change: every thing that was taught her seemed to impress her with wonder; she was the first child of her age who knew how to appreciate the invention of writing and

printing;

printing: never having been familiarised from the cradle with those arts, she was struck with their utility, and was never tired of admiring their effects: thus she really reaped the benefit of her former total ignorance, and felt more than any other the value of those things. Alphonsine possessed a charming voice; she sang with sweetness, and played in a superior manner on the guitar. It did not take much trouble to teach her music, but it was necessary that she should never hear any thing profane sung: a selection of new anthems was given her, which she sung every day, and soon knew by heart. Diana also taught her to embroider, and Alphonsine was strangely surprised the first time she saw a flower growing beneath the fingers of

of her mother. With such amusements, so new to her, her days passed delightfully: notwithstanding the curiosity which she had evinced to see the heavens, the stars, the forests, the rivers, and all the chief works of the creation, of which she had found so sublime a description in the religious books which were explained to her by the Curate, by being accustomed from her very existence to submission and moderation, her desires were never violent: obedience and the mildness of her disposition tempered her vivacity: she quietly submitted to whatever her mother ordered; or if she was but promised to be satisfied some other day, far from being tormented, it produced nothing in her but a tender

hope:

hope: a pure and submissive soul is ever calm.

One day Diana said to her: " I wish,
" before you are shewn the sight of na-
" ture, to make you acquainted with
" what human industry can accomplish.
" This apartment which we inhabit is
" extremely simple, but that of the
" Countess is very magnificent; and
" there are still some which are more
" handsome; and I will conduct you
" this evening." At eight o'clock the same evening, Alphonsine was conducted to that apartment, where the Countess and Ines expected her. Alphonsine entered into a superb drawing-room lighted up by a very elegant crystal lustre,

every

every taper of which was enclosed in a small gauze frame, so that the light should not be too dazzling for the feeble sight of Alphonsine: struck and mute with admiration, Alphonsine remained some minutes motionless; at length she advanced, and perceived her whole figure reflected in a glass: she had never seen a mirror before, and was ignorant of its use. This object so astonished her, that she approached it with curiosity, and stopping about two paces from the glass, said: "My God! how handsome she "is! how much she resembles my mam-"ma!" when immediately an emotion of jealousy oppressed her heart, she ran to her mother and cried, "Mamma! let "us go." Diana took her by the hand, and notwithstanding her reluctance

forced her to go along with her to the glass. "See," said she embracing her, "look! you will recognize yourself: "do I ever embrace any other but my "Alphonsine?" At these words Alphonsine seemed petrified; but after this new prodigy had been explained to her, joy succeeded her astonishment. "How!" said she to Diana, "is that my countenance which so much resembles "yours? Oh, how I shall love and be "pleased with myself! I will be sur-"rounded with glasses, then I shall feel "so much pleasure in looking at my-"self!" Diana was desirous of moderating these transports by some excellent lessons on morality. Alphonsine kept continually repeating, "Oh, how I love "my figure!"—"But there are a thou-

"sand

" sand more handsome," said Diana. " What does that signify?" said Alphonsine, " I am so much like you!" That very evening one of the glasses in Diana's chamber was uncovered; and as Alphonsine was looking at herself, Diana said to her, " Of what use is that? Am I " not here? can you not look at me?"

True sensibility ever gives the necessary force which we evince for the interest of those we love. Diana accustomed her daughter often to go alone in-to the Countess, who was much pleased with her visits, and always waited for her in the drawing-room. But one evening Alphonsine coming earlier than usual, she did not find the Countess there; and seeing a door half-opened, she entered into a

cabinet, where the first object that struck her looks was a full-length portrait of Alvarez painted in oil colours. She uttered an exclamation of joy, thinking that it was a glass which reflected the figure of Alvarez, and turned about precipitately to look at him: but as soon as she perceived the illusion, she seemed very much troubled that Don Alvarez had not yet returned. She could not refrain from contemplating his picture, and declared that painting was one of the finest of the arts, and that, as soon as she should again see her mother, she should entreat her to let her learn to draw.

We have already mentioned that the Countess had in a singlar manner picked

picked up the picture of Don Pedro, which Diana during her imprisonment had thrown into the fountain: she spoke to Diana, who explained to her this seeming phenomenon. The Countess having returned the portrait to Diana, the latter resolved to make a present of it to her daughter; and on giving it her, said: "This is the picture of your father; "wear it in your bosom, carry it always "about you, but never speak of it to "me: let it suffice you to know that "we may flatter ourselves that your father is still living, though we are "ignorant in what country he resides. "Providence may perhaps one day "point out his retreat, so that we may "again find him, which will be a great "happiness for you: do not forget,

 "therefore,

"therefore, to ask of God every day this
"great favour. I have written his history
"as well as my own: when your reason
"shall be completely matured, in five
"or six years time, I will give you the ma-
"script; but till then do not ask me
"a single question on the subject; it will
"be impossible for me to answer it."
Alphonsine obeyed this mandate: she
received both with emotion and respect
this mysterious portrait which she was
enjoined to conceal; she hung it about
her neck fastened by a gold chain, and
carefully secreted it under her garment,
and never even indirectly asked a single
question relative to her father.

Diana immediately after her deliver-

ance caused that event to be published in all the public papers, hoping that if Don Pedro still existed, this astonishing news might perhaps still reach his ear: what caused her the greatest chagrin was, that perhaps she should never be able to legitimate the birth of Alphonsine. Diana had a number of other griefs, the motives of which no one could understand; she was no more familiarised to the daily dangerous recurrences in life; she feared every thing on the account of Alphonsine, and the more so because of her total inexperience. If she was a moment from her sight, she felt an invincible uneasiness and disquietude. Great misfortunes teach us to know the frailty of happiness: when we have for a long time been accustomed to suffer,

we do but enjoy with trembling. Oh! if the heart of a mother could be fathomed, it would be discovered to contain immense treasures of tenderness and inconceivable weaknesses. It would be found replete with inconsistences and eccentricities of love, with disinterested and generous sentiments the most affecting as well as pure. Dare I venture to say it? Is there a person who would believe it? Diana more than once regretted the loss of her dungeon! In vain did her reason spurn such wild notions; they agitated her, without convincing her. She was no longer the universe to her daughter. . . . Alphonsine had conceived a friendship for Ines; she began to amuse herself with the Countess; she passed half an hour away from her mother, not only

without pain, but even with pleasure. During those absences Diana, with her eyes fixed on her watch, counted the minutes; and if her daughter staid a second beyond the time fixed for her return, Diana would accuse her secretly of ingratitude; and she was obliged to use every effort to collect her reason, in order to prevent her daughter from seeing that she was hurt: she shewed the greatest coolness to every person. Alphonsine, as has been said before, never embraced any person besides her mother: but her affectionate manners very much distressed Diana, and which were the means of her keeping herself at a great distance from the Countess and Ines, whom she had the injustice sometimes to suspect of

 wishing

wishing to alienate the heart of her daughter. Often a single caress of Alphonsine would dispel all those gloomy ideas, when she would again deplore her extreme susceptibility; she felt, however, that she could no longer be the only society of Alphonsine, or the only object of her affection and her thoughts: she found that it would be necessary to moderate her impassionate tenderness; that this tenderness, so natural during their captivity, became a folly in their present situation. She repeated to herself every thing which any sensible friend could have told her on this subject; but, habituated for thirteen years exclusively to the most tender and most affectionate sentiments, it was no longer in

her

her power to suppress that energy: she promised herself, however, that Alphonsine should never suffer from its consequences.

CHAP. XXX.

THREE months had now elapsed since Diana's deliverance; it was the latter end of June; and the Countess and Dazeli were to be the sponsors at Alphonsine's baptism. Dazeli returned about three weeks before the day that was fixed for that ceremony: he was at that time in the highest favour at Court, and the King had just honoured him with the title of Grandee. He paid a visit every evening to Diana, and generally stopped with her about an hour and a half. He always beheld this lady with the most tender interest, so handsome, and still

so

so young: he recollected with deep emotion his former sentiments for her; but her misfortunes, her situation, the existence of her daughter, and her exclusive tenderness for that child, would not permit him to indulge either in the hope or desire of persuading her to form a new engagement. Dazeli passed the whole of the day in the company of the Countess, Ines, and two or three other persons who were attached to the former. He possessed pleasing talents; Ines possessed them still in a superior degree: reading, music, walking, and conversation, successively occupied their time. The Countess made Dazeli relate the story of his captivity, and his amours with Elvira. Ines, during this recital, seemed occupied either with needle-work

or

or painting, but she still listened attentively: the gaiety of Dazeli amused her, and his manner of thinking perfectly agreed with her own. Ines, replete with wit and perspicuity, was at the age of nineteen as well informed as others who have passed their time in high life could be at thirty. Grateful and sensible, she bore a true attachment to the Countess, whose idol she was; and the idea of marrying Don Alvarez pleased her only in as much as it would contribute to make her the Countess's daughter. She knew that the Countess attached all the happiness of her life to this union, and that thought alone was sufficient to fix her desires and her wishes. The praises which Ines had for a long time received on her premature season, the confidence of the

Countess,

Countess, and the ascendancy which she had over her, far from rendering her imperious and vain, gave her however a tone somewhat assuming for her age: had her mind possessed less grace, and had there been less sprightliness in her disposition, she might have been thought somewhat pedantic. Her mind and understanding were far superior to those of the Countess, but her gratitude prevented her displaying them. She might have a confused notion of the faults and foibles of the Countess, but she never permitted herself to cast any reflections, or pass a judgment on them. Far from observing the same reserve with respect to comparing herself to Don Alvarez, she thought him much inferior in some respects than he really was; she did not consider

consider at their age how much advantage a difference of two years gave to a woman of a strong mind and natural endowments. However, though little susceptible of a violent passion, she entertained so tender a friendship for Don Alvarez, that even love would not have eradicated that from her mind, and thus did her projects perfectly agree with her duties. One evening the Countess, in the presence of Ines, asked Dazeli the reason why he did not get married? Dazeli hesitated to answer. At that moment the Countess's chaplain entered: he usually came every evening, to play a game at chess with the Countess. The latter, naturally absent, totally forgot her question; she rose in order to go near the window to the chess-board, while

while Ines and Dazeli remained in their place. Ines, looking at Dazeli with a smile, said: "I will never repeat the "question which the Countess addressed "you, because I perceive by your em-"barrassment, that you have made a "choice which you are afraid to de-"clare."—"And do you imagine you "can guess that choice?"—"Yes; I "know the object."—"Oh! I defy "you to name it."—"It is Diana."—"The mother of Alphonsine!" This exclamation, uttered in the most animated tone, said every thing. Ines, from that moment, was persuaded that she had harboured a mistaken opinion in this respect for already four months; and surprised and confounded, she remained silent.

silent. "Well," said Dazeli, "name "another; if you guess, I will confess." At these words Ines blushed, and cast down her eyes; and Dazeli, answering as it were to her thoughts, said in a low and trembling voice: "Yes, Madam . . ." Ines precipitately arose, and seated herself by the side of the Countess.

During the rest of the time Dazeli remained pensive and silent. Ines, on the contrary, spoke more than usual, fearing lest her manner should otherwise disclose an air of uneasiness and absence. She nevertheless answered to every thing which was said to her less judiciously than usual; and for that whole evening she had that kind of constrained vivacity,

city, which in women who are free from affectation always indicates a secret agitation at heart.

As soon as Ines was alone, she maturely reflected on what had past. Being accustomed to render an account of herself of her impressions, she confessed that Dazeli's declaration had caused at first in her some emotions of joy; but on thinking that Dazeli incessantly spoke of his friendship for Don Alvarez, that he often wrote to him, and that Don Alvarez himself had conceived a true attachment for Dazeli, she felt nothing but indignation. The next day, in the presence of Dazeli, she turned the conversation upon false and perfidious friendship, which she spoke of with horror;

at

at the same time she affected to treat Dazeli with a coolness bordering on disdain. He treated her reflections and severity with a great deal of indifference, knowing his conduct to be perfectly justifiable. Don Alvarez, ever since his departure, had seemed in his letters to be occupied but with Aphonsine; he spoke of none other besides her to Dazeli, and intreated him that while he kept his sentiments for Alphonsine an inviolable secrecy, he would declare to Ines, that after having maturely reflected on the kind of attachment which they bore each other, he felt that the union projected from their infancy would not promote their happiness, and that he should seek and prepare the means to apprize the Countess of it without afflicting her.

Don

Don Alvarez, in order to facilitate this explanation, sent a letter to his friend, which was intended to be shewn to Ines, and in which he did not mention a single word of Alphonsine. Many motives had induced him to charge Dazeli with this commission: a letter written to Ines might perhaps fall into the hands of the Countess; Ines herself might think it her duty to shew it her; in short, by the means of this negociation, Dazeli himself might become interesting to Ines: he was amiable, and he thought Ines charming; should he fall in love with her, and succeed in obtaining her affection, how many obstacles would thus be removed! Such were the hopes of Don Alvarez, and such as Dazeli participated in: neither of them, however, had but

a super-

a superficial knowledge of Ines's principles, and of her firm and resolute disposition.

Alphonsine was to be baptised the next day, and all the castle were busily employed in preparations for that ceremony. The Countess, who was charged to execute on this occasion the intentions of Diana, left the drawing-room every moment to give her orders, often taking Ines with her. But after dinner Ines found a pretext to be excused from following her, in order, according to her wishes, that she might be left alone with Dazeli. She had for some hours been in the most violent agitation. The manner of indifference with which Dazeli had traited her attacks, caused her a most

painful

painful mortification as well as indignation: she burnt with impatience to explain herself directly, and to give free vent to her contempt for such a treacherous friend, such an insensible lover, whom the most stinging reproaches could not move; in short, for such a monster . . . . whose indifference clearly proved that he was not even in love! Had he had a great passion as an excuse, though we might not have shewn him any indulgence, it would nevertheless have demanded our pity; for thus women naturally compassionate those *unfortunate* men whom they think amiable.

As soon as Ines found herself alone with Dazeli, she addressed him in plain and unrestrained terms; she began in a most

most contemptuous tone, although with an affected calmness: it was easy to perceive that she was repeating a discourse studied in the morning: her expressions were choice and noble, although sarcastic, her sentences strong and well turned, her deportment severe and composed; but all this affected solemnity was completely disconcerted by the tranquil countenance of Dazeli. Ines thought that she even perceived somewhat of a smile on his lips; then her eloquence forsook her; she stammered, she blushed, and in vain endeavoured to conceal her anger. She found herself incapable to stay and hear Dazeli, who wished to speak in his turn; she rose up to leave him, but he stopped her, and presented to her the letter from Don Alvarez,

which

which she took, and read immediately: she saw by that writing that not only Dazeli was not a perfidious friend, but that, notwithstanding his secret sentiments, he had exhorted Don Alvarez, in the strongest terms, to fulfil his engagements. Ines felt her anger now vanish; she only was embarrassed at having shewn it, and only felt the confusion of having made a long speech so injurious and so misplaced. Nevertheless, she consoled herself in the thought that Dazeli was not guilty, and listened to him. The latter, forgetting both the quarrel as well as Don Alvarez, now spoke for himself. Ines did not interrupt him; she thought it her duty to shew this condescension to the man whom she had treated so ill, and with so much injustice,

and that at least this would be some kind of reparation.

A few minutes after Ines resumed the conversation: "I am glad," said she to Dazeli, "to find myself in the wrong, "and that I am able to preserve my "esteem for you. However, Sir, I "have still a reproach to make you: "that is, in having thought that the fancy "and the levity of an infant could make "me resolve to break an engagement "which is dear to me, and which I re-"gard as sacred. Don Alvarez has told "me nothing by saying that he did not "entertain a passion for me. I should "be very sorry to have inspired him "with a sentiment in which I cannot "participate: he has all that attachment

"for

" for me which I wish him to have:
" you may quit his apprehensions re-
" specting my happiness; I shall ever
" seek it in friendship, in fulfilling of my
" duties, and I shall never be apprehen-
" sive for his. As to your sentiments
" for me, Sir, I must beg you to regu-
" late them according to my situation:
" never speak of them to me, and never
" look on me but as the wife of Don Al-
" varez. Be assured that I shall forget
" this conversation, and never seek to
" bring it to my recollection if you attach
" any value to my confidence." At
these words Ines arose, made Dazeli a
profound curtesy, and withdrew."

CHAP. XXXI.

EVERY person in the castle awaited the next day with the most anxious expectations, that solemn day which was to form so interesting an epoch in the life of Alphonsine. Alphonsine passed the whole of the day with her mother and the good old Curate, who recapitulated to her all those religious instructions which he had already given her, and particularly those on baptism. Alphonsine, on the point of enjoying the bounties of her Creator, listened to this venerable pastor with the

most

most profound emotion. Diana, transported at the happiness she at length promised to her daughter, had prepared every thing that could render the ceremony awful and impressive; solely occupied with Alphonsine, she employed for her alone all the resources of her mind and imagination: she was the most ingenious as well as the most tender of mothers.

They retired to rest earlier than usual, as they wished to rise at the dawn: the mother and daughter lay in two small beds placed by the side of each other; they slept but little, and as the hours of the night by degrees elapsed, their agitation becoming more lively, they resolved to rise long before day. Diana dressed Alphonsine in a

long muslin robe of the finest texture, and dazzling whiteness: she dressed her flaxen hair, and disposed of it in an elegant comb set with rich pearls; her necklace and her zone, formed of fine pearls, were fastened with clasps of emeralds: a nosegay of white hyacinths completed this dress, equally noble as well as elegant.

When Alphonsine was dressed, she threw herself into the arms of Diana. "Oh, " my mother!" said she, " we are at " length going to contemplate together " the heavens and nature: you would " not behold them without me; but in " this very moment of surprise and joy, " I am sure your eyes will only be fixed " on your child! Do promise to raise

" them

" them towards Heaven at the same time
" with myself."—" Yes," answered
Diana; " for, on beholding that delight-
" ful spectacle, I shall better feel the
" impression which you will receive.
" And you, my child, who are about
" to take your part on this earth, and that
" portion of happiness which God has
" destined for all his creatures, you who
" are about to acknowledge all the power
" and bounty of your Creator, you, in
" short, my child, to whom Heaven
" would not give the use of all your fa-
" culties until you possess ample reflec-
" tion and reason, you, above all, ought
" only to think of the Author of all good
" on this memorable day. In the midst
" of all the wonders which will surround
" you, and on receiving such magnifi-

"cent gifts, O, my Alphonsine! may
"astonishment, admiration, and joy,
"produce in your young and sensible
"heart nothing but love and gratitude!"
When Diana had spoken these words, Alphonsine perceived through the blind a small glimpse of day-light: she embraced her mother with transports, and entreated her to go. Diana, covering herself with a long veil, which she extended also over her daughter, they both left their apartment.

It had been previously agreed that Diana should proceed to the church before any other person in the castle, and even before the Countess and Dazeli, who were the sponsors of Alphonsine. Diana was desirous of being alone with her

her daughter in the happiest moment of her life; they descended a back-stair-case which led into a small court, where they found a carriage ready prepared: Alphonsine, still covered by her mother's veil, and led by her, they both entered the carriage together, the blinds of which were shut. When the carriage drove off, the noise and the motion, so new to Alphonsine, caused in her a lively impression of fear, although she had previously been made acquainted with it; and notwithstanding all that her mother could say to her, and her holding her embraced all the time, she could not conquer her fears, which were always extreme when ever the coach turned and a little inclined on one side, or where the road was a little rough. It was necessary to ascend a

 very

very steep hill; and having reached the summit, they stopped. "O, my child!" said Diana, "we are at length arrived at "the place of our destination!" At these words Alphonsine expressed the most lively emotions of joy; she wept, she trembled, she embraced her mother: her heart palpitated with such agitation, that Diana was desirous of waiting until she had become somewhat calm before she suffered her to get out of the carriage. At length she ordered the door to be opened: she took her child in her arms, dismissing the carriage and her people, and carried the happy Alphonsine, still veiled, about thirty paces distance, where she seated her upon a mossy bank which had been previously prepared. The keen air of the mountain, notwithstand-

ing

ing its purity, affected Alphonsine: she begged a minute's repose before she unveiled herself. From that part of the mountain in front were seen a long vista, formed by large orange and rose trees, clumps of honey-suckles covering and concealing their cases; a new grass-plat, bordered on each side with the handsomest flowers, displayed a charming tapestry In the midst of this superb avenue, at the end of which was discovered the church, a Gothic and venerable edifice: the columns were ornamented with foliage, and the projecting cornices supporting most handsome vases filled with flowers. At the entrance of this avenue, where Alphonsine was seated, were seen to the right extensive valleys intersected by the river Xenil:

the other side of the mountain offered the most striking contrast to this smiling picture; the eye, astonished as it were, discovered stupendous rocks, cascades, and wild forests. The church, situated on the summit of the mountain, majestically overlooked this inhabited solitude as well as the most fertile valley; it seemed to be an august emblem of the true Deity, who reigns over the whole universe, who pays to man the reward of his labours, who alone can fill the desert with this immensity in which he renovates the animal and vegetable world.

The slight degree of oppression which Alphonsine had felt being over, "O mam-
"ma!" said she, "what a perfumed
"air, what delicious scents! may I raise

"my

" my eyes?" Alphonsine, better to conform to the intentions of her mother, had for the whole time scrupulously kept her eyes fixed on the ground ever since she had left the carriage. "Yes," exclaimed Diana, "let us, my Alphonsine, "enjoy at last the beauties of the universe, which has for so many years been "hidden from me; restore to your happy mother the celestial light of nature; open your eyes, and look before "you." At these words Diana took off her veil, and placed Alphonsine in the front of the orange vista. Alphonsine uttered a shriek of surprise and admiration: her mother still holding her in her arms, made her look to the other side, shewing her the valleys, the river, the forests, and the rising sun. Alphonsine,

sine, dazzled and transported, fell on her knees ; and her first sentiment was to pay her homage to the majesty of their supreme Creator, and the second to throw herself into the bosom of her mother. The purest tears of piety, gratitude,and filial love, overflowed her countenance ; it was in the enchanted eyes of her daughter that she experienced a return of all her happiness, and in which she again beheld the heavens. Alphonsine raised her head, and joining her hands with a passionate expression, turned herself towards the sun, Diana fixing her looks upon that brilliant orb, which had only shone upon the first days of her youth. " Oh, my daughter !" exclaimed she, " may we then at last contemplate this " charming spectacle ! O bounteous

" God !

" God! accompany her ; deign for ever
" to fix in the heart of this innocent
" creature all those sentiments with
" which she is at present impressed, that
" the sight of those thy chief works
" of creation may never excite in her
" but such pure sensations, that, being
" accustomed to the happiness and joy
" of thy gifts, may but augment in her
" soul the gratitude and adoration which
" are due to thy majesty! . . ."—" O
" my tender mother!" said Alphonsine,
" how far was I from forming any idea
" of the power and bounty of the Deity!
" With what sincerity shall I pronounce
" the vows of my baptism in renouncing
" *the pomps and vanities of the world!*
" Ah! what human pomp can equal
" that which surrounds us?" In saying
these

these words, Alphonsine could no longer bear the brilliant rays of the sun, but turned her eyes, to relieve them, on the avenue of flowers. Diana then told her that it was time to proceed to church, and they both proceeded accordingly. Alphonsine, led by the scent of the flowers, was desirous of seeing the flowers she so much loved : she approached a rose bush, and contemplated with delight that beautiful flower so dear to her recollection. Being called away by Diana, she followed, but still stopped at every step to admire the different flowers scattered in profusion in their path, and to smell their perfume : she beheld for the first time the brilliant butterfly sparkling with crimson and azure, fluttering about the shrubs ; she first took it for an animated

flower,

flower, which had escaped from its stem, for she thought that this pure and keen air which she respired could give it all that motion and life: she expressed the same surprise on seeing the birds; but soon all her attention was drawn to the front of the church; by degrees as she approached it, a profound religious respect rendered her more silent and collected. The Curate was standing at the door of the church to receive Diana: he was followed by the rest of the clergy, who as well as himself were dressed in gold and silver robes, the pious offerings which Diana had sent them the day before. On entering this sacred edifice, Alphonsine experienced an emotion which for a moment rendered her immovable. This spacious and majestic church

church was ornamented throughout with garlands of lilies and roses; every one of its festoons of flowers was fastened to various crystal globes of variegated colours, containing lighted tapers; a multitude of large tapers were burning on the grand altar, which had been newly guilt, covered with flowers, and on which the holy sacrament was exposed. Four-and-twenty children, clad in white, with blue and silver sashes, held burning incense round the altar. When Alphonsine entered the choir, she trembled on hearing the striking sound of the organ; the children then, with sweetness and judgment, chaunted the *Veni Creator!* Alphonsine thought she was admitted to the celestial concert of the angels; never was the piety of the saints more exalted,

more

more tender than hers at this moment. Instructed in the mysteries of her religion, she found herself for the first time in the sanctuary of the true God, with all her innocence and all her reason. The spectacle of nature, which often broke in upon her sight, was at the same time to her a wonderful discovery, and the most striking proof of religious truths. Her faith was still more increased by her admiration in the midst of such prodigies, that she was not ignorant that human science could not explain: her mind received without any obstruction every divine light of revelation, and the mysteries of religion seemed to her less astonishing than those of nature.

The Curate conducted her towards the Confessional;

Confessional ; Alphonsine approached the tribunal of penitence, with the soul and countenance of an angel, and with the deportment and contrition of an humble penitent. She repeated (notwithstanding her purity, without doubt with reason) that she had never so much loved the Eternal Being, Creator of the universe, and Benefactor of men : with a heart palpitating with love and gratitude, she shed bitter tears in accusing herself of lukewarmness and ingratitude, and she received the absolution with all the joy that the least expected grace can inspire.

The Curate invited Alphonsine to follow him, and conducted her towards the baptismal font. The Countess, Ines, Dazeli, and their suite, then entered the

church ;

church; they ranged themselves about the spot. Diana not venturing, in so sanctified a place, before so many witnesses, to appear as a mother, covered herself with her veil, and placed herself sighing on one side a few paces from her daughter. The ceremony commenced: all eyes were fixed on Alphonsine; she never appeared so affecting and so handsome; her angelic person, joined to her natural charms, exhibited a solemn and celestial dignity. She pronounced her baptismal vows with enthusiasm; and after having promised to renounce the pomp of the world, she precipitately took off her sash and necklace of pearls and emeralds, and turned towards her mother as if to consult her. Diana, conceiving her design, nodded her approbation, when

when Alphonsine, with her knees on the ground, presented to the Curate these valuable ornaments. " Father," said she, " bless these offerings, that they may " be for ever deposed on the altar of the " Lord!" She performed this action with such simplicity and expression, that she greatly affected all the spectators. During this ceremony, Diana, bathed in tears, recalled to her mind that night whereon she had received her daughter; and pressing her to her bosom, had herself imprinted the sacred mark of christianity on her head. She reflected with delight that it was she who had insured her salvation; she solicited Heaven with ardour to deign to cultivate that pure and noble soul, in disposing its impressions, so that in future the common seductions of life should

should ever serve her only to bring her to virtue.

After the baptism, the Curate conducted Alphonsine towards the grand altar: transported with joy, and yet troubled, alarmed and scarcely able to breathe, Alphonsine advanced with her hands joined: the Curate shewed her the holy sacrament with the most inexpressible emotion, a profound sentiment of humility, gratitude and adoration. She ventured to fix her looks on the crystal which enclosed the Saviour of man, and Creator of heaven and the universe... Such as the Scripture paints to us the angels, burning with love, and trembling with respect about the eternal throne, such was Alphonsine, penetrated with holy fear,

fear, adoration, and trembling, on perceiving the golden sun which contained the consecrated host. Her pure and innocent soul sublimely soaring and elevating itself, as it were, above human comprehension, seemed at this moment to conceive a distinct idea of the Divine Majesty. This thought was rapid. What mortal could have strength of imagination enough to fix and retain it?... Alphonsine, no longer able to bear that supernatural light, and overcome by admiration, cast down her eyes, she only felt the necessity of humbling herself in the dust; she prostrated herself; she extended her arms on the marble, and her pious tears bedewed the steps of the altar.

As

As soon as she was told that it was necessary to go to the Curate, she rose, and was led to him. When they had left the church, she precipitated herself into the arms of her mother, as if to congratulate herself on all the happiness which she had enjoyed: they then visited with some interest the Curate's house, which was at the back of the church, and consequently in the same situation as that edifice. From this saloon they discovered on one side the meadows and cottages of his parish; and on the other, from the windows of his oratory, they viewed the wild parts of the mountain: it was there that he resigned himself to meditation, while from the other extremity of his house he overlooked the villages and the fields. "O worthy pastor!

"happily placed between solitude and his
"people, who seeks and finds God in the
"desert, and, with a glance, watches
"over his numerous and obedient flock
"entrusted to his care and vigilance."

He had prepared an excellent collation, composed of all kinds of creams and the finest fruits in season; but Alphonsine did not place herself at table; she ran to a window which she saw open, and nothing could divest her from contemplating so delightful a prospect.

They were desirous of returning to the castle before the sun had become too powerful. Diana, the Countess, Alphonsine, Ines, and Dazeli, got into an open carriage, and drove towards the castle.

castle. Alphonsine, during this journey, did not exhibit the least fear: the too delicate feelings of Diana were secretly offended at it; she recollected that, during her ride from the castle to the mountain, her own caresses and conversation could not amuse or encourage her daughter, while now she saw that the trees and flowers had made her forget all her fears; and to increase her trouble, she reproached herself with partaking only as it were by halves, this joyous and happy moment of Alphonsine! Ah, let us pity maternal weakness: a mother is not always unjust, although she may be unreasonable: she is always ready to grant with transports that which she wishes reciprocally to obtain; she knows but too well that it is impossible

 that

that she should be loved equal to her own love; but the proofs which she experiences to the contrary, neverthe-less, are a source of affliction to her.

Alphonsine, far from conceiving the internal chagrin which her mother felt, abandoned herself wholly to the plea-sure of beholding the charming country which she passed through: she rapidly asked numerous questions without wait-ing for a single answer, forgetting imme-diately the objects which had excited her curiosity, to admire those which next at-tracted her notice.

On arriving at the castle, Alphonsine ran into her chamber, to open the win-dows which looked into the garden.

This

This new prospect seemed admirable to her; but Diana remarking that her eyes looked red by being fatigued with the light, and that she kept them but half opened: the blinds were let down, through which Alphonsine could still perceive the heavens and the garden.

Alphonsine before dinner recollected that she had a casket filled with diamonds: she went to seek it, and placed it on the table by the side of her mother: "Mamma," said she, "I promised to God to renounce the vanities "of the world; and I know very well, "that diamonds are one of them."— "Yes," answered Diana, "if we wear "them with vanity, and are proud of "possessing them." At these words Alphonsine smiled, not understanding a

sentiment which seemed to her so extravagant. "Thus," said Dianá, "you may "look on them without a crime."—"Mamma, these diamonds are useless; "the only thing which I should like "to have always are roses."—"And "wherefore?"—"Ah, mamma, you "know."—"Well, I promise to give "you a nosegay of them every day, "and even during the winter: as for "the diamonds, we will sell them, and "distribute the money which they will "fetch, among some poor families." An hour after this conversation, Diana gave Alphonsine a bunch of roses, from which she had carefully plucked all the thorns, in order that they might the better bring to her recollection those that she had had in the cavern.

CHAP. XXXII.

Alphonsine beheld the day decline with extreme pleasure; she was allowed to open the windows to contemplate the setting sun; and, besides, she was permitted to take a long walk by moonlight. After supper, when the castle clock struck ten, Diana took her daughter by the hand, and descended into the park. Conducted by a servant, who walked before, they crossed a part of the garden, and opened a small door which led them into the fields. Their guide conducted them to the midst of a meadow, and at the foot of a willow left

them. Diana seated herself with Alphonsine on the mossy bank, and both remained silent for some minutes. The sky, without a cloud, was spangled with stars; the moon shed a clear, mild, and pure light over the hills and the meadows, and yet so lively that one could see the colours, distinguish the forms, and not confound the dark foliage of the pine with that of the silvered willow. The mellow tints of the flowers, of the water, and the verdure, helped to display more strongly the firmament in all its splendor: it seemed as if the silent earth was only thus rich and mute, in order to give the religious man the entire faculty of profoundly meditating and elevating his looks, his soul, and his thoughts, without experiencing any attention.

Alphonsine

Alphonsine did not now evince that extreme joy which she had shewn at the sight of all the dazzling beauties of nature, enlivened by the brightness of the sun. She had admired on the mountain all the magnificence of the Creator, whilst now in contemplating the vaulted sky, and the stars of night, she thought to see all his love. She did not give herself up to those transports and those many emotions which she had felt in the morning; she could but love, she could but form a vague idea of infinite felicity, and desire it with a delicious hope. More moved than surprised, her sensibility absorbed her admiration. When we love beyond bounds the Sovereign of perfection, we no longer retain the faculty of being astonished; we no longer

know that we admire; and, no doubt, the happy soul, freed from its mortal coils, and bounding into the bosom of God, does not at that moment feel any thing but the supreme joy of Divine love.

Alphonsine, with her hands crossed on her bosom, her head elevated towards heaven, her lips half opened, her eyes fixed on the stars, remained motionless. In that calm and majestic attitude she observed a profound silence, and forgot the use of her speech, which at that moment had become useless, or at least insufficient for her expression: having reached that elevation by perfect innocence and piety, how could that infant in her ingenuous language, or even with all human eloquence, how could she

have

have expressed that which she felt? Associated as it were to the felicity of angels, she was incapable of reflecting on these pure and sublime sensations, and of feeling a desire to describe them.

Diana, breaking their silence—" My " child," said she, throwing one of her arms about her daughter's neck, " do " not separate your soul from mine; " speak, my Alphonsine! Oh, come " back to me; without quitting God, you " may; I can never be more closely " united with him than when I am think- " ing of you; remember, your mother " is here!"—" Ah! should I be thus " happy if she were not present?" replied Alphonsine."—" Oh, how solemn " is this night" exclaimed Diania,

 " which

" which you contemplate for the first
" time! . . . You never will forget this
" deep impression; but always remem-
" ber that the Almighty had some de-
" sign when he thus overspread the earth
" with a sable veil during a longer time
" than we require for sleep. By thus
" hiding all vain and perishable objects,
" the Lord, without a doubt, invites us
" to meditate on everlasting ones. Du-
" ring the august night, when you see
" nothing but the heavens, every pro-
" fane thought vanishes, and leaves room
" only for reflection or infinity and
" eternal life! Alas! oft when we ad-
" mire the beauty of the verdant fields,
" oppressive recollections crowd on our
" hearts. The most peaceable countries
" have formerly been plundered by ava-

" rice,

" rice, or ravaged by war; violent and
" audacious usurpers have overrun the
" universe like a devouring flame, which
" never stops so long as it finds whereon
" to feed its rapacity: but let us lift
" up our eyes on those azure fields
" which all men may contemplate with-
" out fighting for them! There nothing
" reminds us of injusice; a majestic
" order and sublime harmony shine on
" all sides; nothing exhibits the traces
" of havoc and destruction; all speaks
" of glory, happiness, and immortality."
This language was not above Alphon-
sine's comprehension: although she was
in many respects more ignorant than the
children of her age, she possessed a lof-
tiness of heart and imagination which
are very seldom observed in youth; her
soul

soul had never been contracted by the meannesses of vanity and coquetry; having yet made no reflections on society, she had only meditated on death, on eternity, or her Creator's goodness; and taught by love and gratitude, both of which promote great and noble reflections, all her science dwelt in her soul.

Diana rising, and taking hold of Alphonsine's hand: "My daughter," said she, "we will consecrate this night by "some good action. Good deeds, as "you may have learnt in the Gospel, are "best done in darkness and conceal- "ment. Woe betide them who profane "the mystic veil of Christian charity!" —"Where are we going, mamma?"— "Into a cottage hard by, to carry some

"assistance.

" assistance to a distressed family."—
" Oh, mamma! this estate is yours; I
" hope that soon no poor people will be
" found in it. . . . You know that it did
" not belong to the Countess."—" Had
" I not known it, I should have guessed
" so. The owner of this place was the
" same person who kept us confined in
" the cavern; he was your enemy, he
" must have been void of feeling. He
" has left me a valuable charge, that of
" doing the good which his passions
" prevented him from doing himself."—
" So Providence decreed that his hard
" heartedness should in the end conduce
" to our felicity."—" Ah, without a
" doubt! Providence was preparing it,
" and in many different ways too!"—
While they spoke thus, Diana and her

daughter

daughter crossed the meadows at a slow pace. The inhabitants of the cottage were forewarned of their approach, and expected them: a light placed on the top, window of the small dwelling, served to guide the steps of Diana. After a moment's silence: " Mamma," said Alphonsine, " it is out of the houses and " about the fields that robbers are met " with?"—" How! are you afraid?"— " I think that if I was thus alone with " you, far from every habitation during " the day, I might be perhaps a little " alarmed at the idea of robbers, but the " darkness of the night makes me easy. " When I contemplate this enamelled " sky, all idea of fear vanishes away."— As Alphonsine was speaking these words, she perceived the cottage that was but

thirty paces distance from them. Not having ever seen yet any but stone edifices of a different construction, she did not think that little cottage was a human habitation, and she asked her mother what it was. "My child," said Diana, "it "is the dwelling of the poor, and a "very wretched one too: the thatched "roof on our side is partly sunk in, it "required nothing but a little straw and "some pieces of wood to mend it; and "these unfortunate people cannot afford "themselves that comfort! . . . Judge "what must be their distress!" . . . "But "they are surrounded by trees and mea-"dows; they have windows, and may "at least enjoy the sight of the heavens "and the fields."—"I understand you; "you are thinking of the cavern. Ah,

"my

" my dear daughter, ought this recol-
" lection to blunt thy feelings of compas-
" sion!" . . . — " Oh, no, mamma; I
" know the poor are in want of every
" article of necessity, therefore I do pity
" them. But of all the unfortunate peo-
" ple, those whom I shall always feel most
" for are prisoners . . .—" What, still
" thinking of the cavern!"—" Dear
" mamma, you know, that as to myself
" I never was a prisoner; you alone
" have suffered. Near you, your child
" was always happy." . . . . Diana, much
affected, raised her daughter. By this
time they had reached the cottage door,
where Diana having knocked, a young
woman came and opened the door.
Diana named herself, on which the young
woman threw herself at her feet: Diana
having

having raised her up, Nugna (that was the cottage woman's name), introduced them into a small room where the whole family was assembled. This family consisted of an old grandmother upwards of fourscore years of age, her son and daughter, her grand-daughter, who had been a widow three months, and her infant at her breast. This young woman had lost her husband at a time when both her father and mother were dangerously ill; and in order to afford them the necessary assistance, she had sold every article of furniture which she was possessed of, excepting a spinning-wheel, two beds, a wooden arm-chair belonging to the grandmother, and a straw mattress for herself and child. She had worked at her spinning-wheel during the greater

part

part of the nights, in order to support her unfortunate parents; the grandmother being blind, could afford her no assistance. Diana rapidly apprised her daughter of these particulars, who saw with much emotion the old grandmother sitting in her arm-chair, and the father and mother in a state of convalescence, seated on their-bed: the infant girl lay asleep on the straw mattress. Alphonsine had never seen a babe: this attracted her whole attention; she drew near; "Poor little creature," said she, "what cares she must require!" . . . The infant awoke; the mother took her up, for she cried: she gave her the breast. Alphonsine seeing the child suckling, experienced the most lively emotion, and the soft and pious tears of filial gratitude

bedewed

bedewed her countenance. Diana squeezed her hand; she read with delightful transports what passed in her heart at the time! "How old is your "little girl?" enquired Diana.—"Four "months," replied Nugna; "I have had "already a great deal of trouble with "her." . . .—"Oh, and with me du- "ring twelve years, mamma," exclaimed "Alphonsine; "and in what place, in "what situation!" . . . . As she uttered these words in a sobbing voice, she threw herself on her happy mother's neck. During the whole time Alphonsine remained in the cottage, she thought of Diana alone; every circumstance seemed to impress her with a new idea of what she had suffered and performed for her. The picture of misfortune, re-

signation

signation and virtue, only reminded her of her mother, and represented her under still more interesting features than any of the surrounding objects! Diana gave Nugna a purse full of gold, promised she would settle a small annuity on her, and cause her cottage to be repaired. Alphonsine enjoyed extremely the happiness and surprise of these good people. Nugna told her, with tears in her eyes, that she could easily perceive she would be as good a lady as her mother in time. "Oh, yes," said Alphon-"sine, for she would be very unhappy if "I was not!"

Nugna accompanied them half way through the meadow; then Alphonsine told her, "Leave us now; we would

"not

" not have you be seen by the servant " who is waiting for us under yonder " tree. Let this be a secret between " us."—" Wherefore?" replied Nugna, disappointed. Diana, aware that the explanation might last rather too long, dismissed Nugna, and hastened to the willow, where having found their servant, they returned to the castle. Thus elapsed the finest day of Alphonsine's life.

Before she laid down, she said a much longer prayer than usual, which she spoke with an angelic fervor. What heavenly comfort must innocence find in her evening prayer, after a day employed as Alphonsine's had been!

CHAP. XXXIII.

THE next day Alphonsine was no more fatigued than usual, but her eyes were extremely weak: the blinds were kept shut during the whole day, and Alphonsine was desired to remain in doors, Diana promising to make her amends by a walk by moonlight. Accordingly, when every person had retired to bed, Diana went out with her daughter, and unattended descended into the park, When Alphonsine found herself in the open air, she thought they were in the fields. "Mamma," said she, "no servant follows us this evening; there is "more

" more mystery in our walk. Are we
" going to perform another good ac-
" tion?"—" Yes, my daughter," re-
plied Diana; " we are going to. return
" thanks to God." Diana's manner and
sound of voice had something solemn,
which struck Alphonsine so much that
she did not utter a single word more.
Diana, meanwhile, advanced towards a
mass of rocks; and Alphonsine, with
astonishment, contemplated that huge
heap of stones crowned with cypress.
" Are these habitations too?" said she.
—" Yes, this was the secret asylum of
" misfortune." In saying these words,
Diana drew nearer, and sought after a
lofty black marble cross, which was to be
found on the top of a rock; and rising
from the midst of a clump of rose-trees,

she perceived it on her right hand, and knelt down .... Alphonsine, much affected, knelt down by her side .... Diana arose again, extended her arms towards Heaven, to which she looked up with a most pathetic expression; she then took a key which was fastened to her sash, and opened a little door, which being painted the same colour as the rock, seemed to form a fragment of it: she threw her arm about her daughter's neck, and drew her into a most obscure passage. "O, mamma! where are we?" said Alphonsine, with extreme emotion. Diana, instead of giving her any answer, apprized her they were to descend a long staircase. Alphonsine followed her mother with a sentiment of terror the more painful, as she had never experienced

any

any thing similar before. After having reached the bottom of the stairs, and advanced about two or three hundred paces in a most profound obscurity, "My "dear child," exclaimed Diana, "don't "you know this place again?..."—"We "are in the cavern, mamma..."—"Well, wherefore do you tremble thus?"—"The darkness terrifies me."—"Does "it call to your mind a painful recollection?"—"No, but since I saw the "heavens and the earth..."—"What, "this cavern frightens you .... you "mean?"—"Frighten! ... Oh, mamma, I was with you! ..."—"And "yet you tremble, you start..."—"I "am no longer accustomed to this terrific "gloom; and besides, it is difficult to "breathe in this cave ... I feel my-

"self oppressed."—"How! This is "your native air."—"There is no air "here."—"But we lived, however, "here" . . . . —"Ah, I cannot con- "ceive it." This last word, which escaped Alphonsine uncautiously, was like a dagger to Diana: she made no answer and continued walking. They passed near the oratory. Alphonsine, on hearing the noise of the cascade, experienced an agreeable sensation, for the first time, during the last quarter ot an hour. She made the sign of the cross, and smelt the fragrance of roses, which reminded her of happy moments. "Ah, mamma," cried she, kissing Diana's hand, "our "rose-trees must have blossomed . . . "Let us visit our chapel." . . . . Diana continued to walk in silence, and made no

no answer. Alphonsine, intimidated, dared not repeat her request. On a sudden, she saw at a distance, the rising part of the cavern illuminated; she uttered a shriek of surprise, hurried her step, and soon arrived at the place which was formerly Diana's chamber, but which now they found decorated as a superb chapel; twelve high chandeliers were placed on the altar, and a magnificent alabaster lamp suspended from the ceiling diffused a bright glare of light at the entrance of the chapel. " My daughter, said she, " this is the place of your nativity, " which my tenderness for you induces " me religiously to consecrate. Let " us go and return our thanks to God, " who gave you life, and has delivered " you from so long a captivity."—" Ah,

 " mamma,

" mamma, said Alphonsine, you alone
" were a captive." At these words
Diana sighed, and, preserving a sorrowful and solemn air, entered the chapel.
Alphonsine followed. Her heart was
oppressed, although she could not guess
what was passing in her mother's mind.
They both knelt down before the altar.
Alphonsine wept as she prayed. Diana,
discontented and unhappy, did not give
loose to affectionate emotions; a
wounded heart seldom indulges in tender effusions. In the course of a few
minutes, Diana, raising her daughter,
conducted her opposite the door of the
cave where they had heard the echo,
and then proposed her to sing the hymn
ending with these words, *Peace be on
earth, and glory to God!* Alphonsine
obeyed.

obeyed. When she had sung with the most affecting voice, the echo (as they expected) repeated three times, *Glory to God!* but immediately after, a choir of young voices issuing from the cave, and accompanied by horns, flutes, and harps, recommenced the hymn. Alphonsine, transported, threw herself on her mother's neck, who gently pushed her aside, saying, "Remember, my daughter, we "are in a consecrated chapel." These words were simple; but at any other moment Diana would have received her daughter's embrace before she spoke them. Alphonsine drew back, and bitter tears suffused her cheeks. "Now," said Diana to her in a low voice, "let "us go into the oratory," and she took hold of her hand. Alphonsine looked

at her in a timid and inquisitive manner. Diana feigned not to observe her emotion, and led her towards the oratory. On entering, Alphonsine, with surprise, saw that part of the grotto was lighted by the moon, a sort of round and irregular window having been cut open through the rock near the cascade, through which the sky was perceived: the cavern was filled with rose-trees, the rocks were covered with fresh moss, and a convenient seat had been erected near the fountain. Diana sat down with her daughter, and taking hold of her hands, "My Alphonsine," said she, "this "evening we have, for the first time, ex"perienced very different sensations.... "This cavern inspires you with sorrow "and terror, and I revisited it with rap-

"tures!

" tures! and yet alone I was charged with
" every care, distracted with every ap-
" prehension; but I had lived in the
" world before!—But with my child I
" was happy; and how could I be other-
" wise? Alphonsine loved in such an af-
" fecting manner, she loved but me; I
" was the whole world to her! .... Oh,
" what recollections do I experience here!"
Diana paused; she felt the hands of
Alphonsine tremble, and was particu-
larly struck with her fixed look. The
moon shone upon her face, and the
expression of her countenance had
something alarming in it. "My child,
" my dear child," said Diana, in dis-
may, "do not grieve; these are not
" meant for reproaches. Hear me . . ."
—"How!" interrupted Alphonsine with
a broken

a broken voice, "do you think that I love
" you less? . . ."—" No, no, you have
" not understood my meaning."—" Oh,
" mamma," exclaimed Alphonsine, fall-
ing at her mother's knèes and burst-
ing into tears, " let us remain here,
" and go out no more . ."—" What do
" you say? . . . . Oh, heavens!"—"Yes,
" let us remain here; I can no longer
" be happy on the earth; I will not quit
" this cavern."—" Ah, my child! be-
" ing together can always suffice for
" our happiness! we should be equally
" happy in the bustle of the world as in
" a desert. . . ."—" O mamma! pardon
" the astonishment which this obscurity
" caused me at first. Yes, I ought
" on entering this place to have re-
" membered your kindness only! I will
" no

" no more quit the cavern. I recollect
" the earth with pleasure in thinking
" that I sacrifice it to you. I wish to
" restore your Alphonsine to you, as
" you wish her to form your happiness:
" when you shall be satisfied with me, I
" shall regret nothing, and shall be-
" come, in my turn, to you, what you
" have been to me." At these words,
Diana took her daughter in her arms; but
her caresses did not at all dispel the grief
of Alphonsine, who continued to repeat
in sobs, *let us remain here.* However,
Diana employed every resource of her
mind to repair the evil which she had
done by endeavouring to persuade her
daughter that she had given a false inter-
pretation to her conversation; and that,
if she had not interrupted her, the re-
maining

maining part which she meant to tell her would have totally undeceived her. Alphonsine seemed partly satisfied: her mother assured her that she ought not to retain the least doubt on her mind; but she still preserved a vague uneasiness and sorrow, which lasted for some time. When she was somewhat calmed, they quitted the grotto, and proceeded in the cavern: it offered an enchanting aspect, all the walls were covered with verdure and flowers; and the lamps, which were concealed behind the foliage, formed the most charming illumination. At a distance was heard the most delightful music; but Diana, by her susceptibility, had destroyed this agreeable fête: she saw, with sorrow, that Alphonsine was no longer in a state to enjoy it. They left

the cavern, and immediately went to lay down. Alphonsine slept; but Diana, during the whole night, had neither sleep nor rest.

On the following day, Alphonsine did not evince less lively expressions again on beholding the heavens and the garden: she did not go to the window until her mother had invited her thither; she seemed to conceal the pleasures which she experienced, and spoke of them no longer; she evinced a cold and constrained air towards Ines and the Countess. Diana, who was carefully watching her, and her alone, felt now with grief, that in friendship as well as love, nothing so much impaired their confidence as an excessive delicacy and ill-timed

timed reproaches. After many reflections, Diana acted the wiser part, and assumed an air as if she did not notice these changes, at the same time seizing every opportunity of quieting her daughter's apprehensions with respect to herself. She affected to be angry that she conducted herself so coolly towards Ines, she praised her good qualities and those of the Countess, and prevailed on her to pay longer visits to the latter. When she returned, she assumed an air of gaiety, and caressed her more than usual. When by a first impression, Alphonsine admired something that was entirely new to her, Diana expressed the most lively joy; and by such repeated conduct she at length overcame and entirely dispelled her uneasiness.

Alphonsine recovered her wonted serenity and happiness. Diana led her every morning to the cavern, where they heard mass in the chapel, which had now become Diana's private chapel. After mass was over, they usually breakfasted tête-à-tête in the cave of the fountain; then Diana read aloud to her a lecture on piety, which was always followed by a long and tender conversation, when Alphonsine visited her aviary and her garden. Ever after this epoch the life of Alphonsine became truly enchanting; she felt herself so happy, that she wished to abridge the time of her sleep, in order to prolong her days. The pleasure of walking was one of her greatest enjoyments, although she never went beyond the park; and far from becoming tired, she daily discovered

discovered some new beauties in it; for at the first onset the aspect of nature did not present to her eyes the variety which it offers to ours: a thousand things very different from each other, seemed to her absolutely alike; she did not enter into the more minute difference of shape and colour, and consequently confounded an infinite number of objects; she was not accustomed to compare, but by degrees acquired that habit; and no longer looking on the numerous trees or animals as one and the same things, because their size or colour was nearly alike, she every day made new discoveries, and her pleasures became as various and inexhaustible as nature itself.

END OF VOL. III.

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